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ABSTRACT

These proceedings contain summaries of presentations given at six workshops held in various locations in the United States and Canada from April through September 1985. The workshop topics represent areas of concern identified by youth corps staff responding to a needs assessment survey conducted in 1985. Topics are: (1) Work Project Development and Implementation; (2) Administrative Issues; (3) Youth Development; (4) Job Development; (5) Starting a Corps; and (6) Staff Development. Presentations were as follows: "Fees for Services" (Joanna Lennon); "Energy Conservation Work" (David Boyd); "Social Service Work" (Mary Bleiberg); "Emergency Work" (John Passerello); "Specialty Crews" (Jerry Kolker, Harvey Morrison); "Fundraising" (Stan Hemphill); "Funding Sources" (Nancy Peterson); "Private Sector Funding" (Gene Binder); "Building Political Support" (Jack Dugan); "Working with Labor Unions" (Jerry Kolker); "Creating Publicity and Awareness" (Marian Decker); "Experiential Learning" (Tony Richards); "Competency-Based Programming" (Susan Curnan, Dick Hitt); "Workplace Literacy" (Lee Leeson, Frank Gaik); "Work Supervisors as Teachers" (Marla Young, Susan Curnan); "Remedial Education" (Karen Thaxton); "Life after the Corps" (Louise Chiatovich); "Job Development" (Mike Sack); "Pre-Employment Planning" (Louise Chiatovich); "Why a Corps: An Overview" (Jerry Kolker); "Training, Recruitment, and Selection" (Tony Richards); and "Improving Communication" (Judy Walsh). Summaries of the following discussions are also included: "Project Selection and Development"; "Operational Issues"; "Tracking and Reporting"; "Creating Visibility for Projects"; "Future Plans"; "Pro Bono Services"; "Expectations of Participants"; "Working with Educational Institutions"; "Mission and Goals"; "Work/Service"; "Youth Development"; "Administrative Structures and Staffing"; "Costs and Value of Corps Programs"; and "Planning and Implementing a Corps." A section entitled "Advice from Veterans" contains suggestions of experienced staff members to those starting a corps. (MN)

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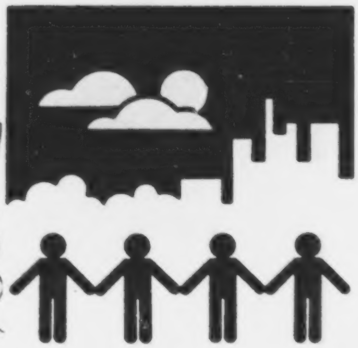
Public/Private Ventures
399 Market Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106-2178
(215) 592-9099

Getting It Done:

The Youth Corps Exchange Project
Proceedings of the 1985 Workshops



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FORWARD

Youth conservation and service corps programs have emerged as one of the 1980's major initiatives in youth programming. Some 26 states and localities now operate year-round programs; all but two of these are less than three years old and most have been initiated in the past two years. Several more states have programs in the planning stages, and a number of communities are considering the expansion of summer efforts.

In recent years, both national organizations and youth corps programs themselves have done a great deal to collect and disseminate information about the youth corps movement. Youth corps practitioners in search of answers on specific issues have kept in touch through an informal network.

P/PV's major assessment of youth corps programs, initiated in 1985 with support from The Ford Foundation, will represent a major new source of information and analysis for youth corps planners and practitioners. It will provide both a series of case studies and a comprehensive discussion of issues that are germane to the entire movement. Its results will provide a broader, more systematic overview of youth corps programs than is currently available.

However, this study will not be completed and disseminated in time to help many of the youth corps programs now in the early stages of design and implementation. In addition, many programs, whether new or fully operational, need assistance in determining the relevance of other programs' experiences to their own needs and in incorporating research findings into their program designs.

The Youth Corps Exchange Project Workshops

To meet these needs, Public/Private Ventures designed the Youth Corps Exchange Project to help establish a coherent system for the exchange of information and training among youth corps practitioners and experts in related fields. With support from The Ford Foundation, the Exchange Project sponsored a series of six workshops in 1985. The workshops were attended by planners and operators of existing and planned year-round youth conservation and service corps programs in North America.

The workshop topics were areas of concern identified by youth corps staff responding to a needs assessment survey conducted by P/PV early in 1985. Workshop agendas included both presentations and discussion periods. According to post-workshop assessments by participants, the sessions were successful in accomplishing a number of objectives: program operators at different levels from different programs developed a sense of how other corps operate and that their strengths and weaknesses are; participants were exposed to new ideas, both from within the youth corps field and from outside experts.

The project will conduct a second series of workshops beginning in the summer of 1986. The workshops will focus both on topics of persisting urgency and on new developments in the youth corps field.

The proceedings of the 1985 workshops are presented here in the order that they were held and reflect the spontaneity and richness of the presentations and discussions rather than a highly organized distillation of the information they shared. The proceedings, therefore, should be read not as an encyclopedia, but as the collected wisdom and insights of the pioneers of the budding youth corps movement.

1. Work Project Development and Implementation focused on the practical problems associated with setting up and operating meaningful project work.

2. Administrative Issues presented methods of building financial, political and community support.

3. Youth Development addressed the operational problems associated with combining work and other youth development activities, and presented some new approaches to providing corpsmembers with learning opportunities both on the job and after work.

4. Job Development was designed specifically for corps that are committed to developing employment opportunities for corpsmembers; participants considered ways to design and implement job development programs to meet program and legislative mandates.

5. Starting a Corps, co-sponsored by the Roosevelt Centennial Youth Project and the Human Environment Center, was also designed for a special group -- state and local planners of new corps. Discussion covered the range of issues that planners commonly confront.

6. Staff Development considered staff selection, training and development, with special focus on crew supervisors/team leaders -- the staff members with direct responsibility for supervising corpsmembers.

The workshops were organized under the direction of Jerome Kolker, P/PV Vice President and Director of Field Operations, by Martha Diepenbrock, on leave from the California Conservation Corps. Upon completion of the 1985 workshops, Ms. Diepenbrock returned to California to take charge of planning and implementing a youth corps in Los Angeles. The workshops were recorded and were later transcribed at P/PV by Phyllis James. Jane Gatto wrote the proceedings on the basis of those transcriptions. Katherine Chavis was in charge of word processing the results and Natalie Jaffe edited the work for publication.

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I. WORK PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

INTRODUCTION

The workshop, held on April 24 and 25 at the California Conservation Corps' facility on Treasure Island in San Francisco, was attended by 22 participants representing 17 state and local youth conservation corps nationwide.

Agenda topics included:

- Project development and selection
- Fees for service
- Generating visibility through project work programs
- Energy conservation projects
- Human service projects
- Operational issues
- Specialty crews
- Quality control
- Tracking and reporting
- Work value
- Emergency work

Resource persons for the workshop were:

- Mary Bleiberg, City Volunteer Corps
- David Boyd, CCC Energy Manager
- Jerry Kolker, Vice President and Director of Field Operations, Public/Private Ventures
- David Lah, research economist, Public/Private Ventures
- Joanna Lennon, East Bay Conservation Corps
- Harvey Morrison, Marin County Conservation Corps
- John Oubre, San Francisco Conservation Corps
- John Passerello, California Office of Emergency Services, formerly California Conservation Corps project director

Most participants were staff members responsible for program development in organizations as old as seven years and as young as a few months. Their corps have different goals, perform different kinds of projects and are administered in different ways, but for two days the staff members' purpose was the same -- to explore ways to make their work program more effective, more efficient and, ultimately, more successful.

In addition to hearing presentations, the participants engaged in energetic discussion. Following are highlights from the discussions and presentations at the workshop.

PROJECT SELECTION AND DEVELOPMENT

(A Discussion)

A corps' mission statement and enabling legislation will determine, to a large extent, what kinds of projects a corps will undertake. But while both can provide focus, choosing and developing a "good" project requires more specific thinking.

While participants in the workshop represented corps that run a wide variety of projects -- from painting a senior citizens' center, to assisting in operating a day-care center, to rescuing waterfowl injured during an oil spill -- they agreed that a good project will almost always meet the same criteria: it will have value for both corpsmembers and the community, and it will be carefully planned and executed in conjunction with an effective sponsor and a capable staff.

Through their discussions, the participants drew up an informal checklist that corps organizers might consider when selecting and developing projects:

Advantages to Corpsmembers

On a tangible level, a good project for corpsmembers is one that:

- provides skills and training that will lead to gainful employment;
- teaches corpsmembers about conservation and the environment;
- offers diversity by being different than the project that preceded it, and by having different tasks within the project;
- provides sufficient work for crews of 10 to 12 members;
- ensures the safety of the crew;
- is located at a site that is accessible to crew members; and
- provides visibility.

The latter is important not only for the organization, but for the corpsmembers themselves. "They like to know that their work is being recognized," one participant said.

But a good project will have results that may be more difficult to measure. If it is a project that corpsmembers know has value to the community -- and is not simply a make-work project -- it will teach them the satisfaction that comes from meeting a challenge, fulfilling a need and doing important work well.

As one work project coordinator said, "I consider a good project one in which folks come home at night dirty, sweaty and tired and say, 'Whew, that was a pretty good day'...when people feel that, even if they were digging a ditch, they were doing something worthwhile."

Another participant emphasized challenge. "Sometimes just the idea of having to struggle through many things makes a project worthwhile."

Still another said, "Need is the linchpin. It's the motivating force for the participants."

Advantages to the Community

A good project from the community's point of view is one that:

- will have lasting value;
- will not displace other workers; and
- will benefit the local economy.

The benefit to the community cannot be overstated, one participant suggested. "That's where you get a lot of support for your program. If you're doing recreational work, for example, and there are a lot of tourists, you're going to get support."

The Role of the Sponsor

Sponsors -- the agencies that pay for project work or provide materials and training -- are crucial to the success of projects. Ideally, good sponsors will:

- provide training to corpsmembers;
- maintain long-term interest in and support for the project;
- provide equipment, supplies and supervision, and deliver them on time; and
- help provide visibility by contacting the media and writing to legislators when the project is completed.

"Quite frankly," one participant said, "if you're working for a sponsor who doesn't provide those things, I suggest you're working for the wrong sponsor, and you need to make your needs known up front."

It is important, participants said, for a corps and its sponsors to have a clear understanding of their respective responsibilities in a written agreement, although the details of the agreement will vary from corps to corps depending on the nature of the project.

The Role of the Staff

Another key element in a successful project is the staff, and three of the most important attributes of a good staff member, participants said, are:

- an ability to cope with change;
- an ability to learn from experience; and
- an ability to motivate corpsmembers to do both.

"Sometimes, training means simply doing, and I don't think we should ever underestimate the ability of corpsmembers to learn things on that basis. So I think it is important to select staff who have the ability to learn that way."

"Something else that is really essential," one participant said, "is finding supervisors who can give young people confidence that they can do the job. You don't always need a supervisor who knows the specific skills, but one who can get out there and learn it and teach the corpsmembers to do it too."

"I think the key to supervision is not trying to find a supervisor who knows everything, but one who is willing and able to learn."

Corps supervisors also play an important role in planning work projects. One participant suggested that corps supervisors should visit the project site before work begins. "Sometimes, they (the supervisors) know more about how a job should be done than the sponsors."

Generating Projects

As part of their discussion of selecting and developing projects, participants talked about ways to generate new projects and at tract sponsors. Most project coordinators have found that there is more to be done in their areas than their programs can under take. However, it is sometimes difficult to get projects that have both environmental impact and diversity.

They conceded that at times a corps will have to make compromises in program goals.

"I think you will never get a project that satisfies all the criteria at a high level. You have to decide if a project is high enough in one area, it can be low in another," one participant suggested.

Those trade-offs may become necessary when an organization is just beginning. "If you're new and starting up, you've got to establish your reputation. And you're going to have to accept some projects or conditions you may not want. If you're a long established program, you have a reputation for being able to get a project done, and you're going to have people knocking on your door. Then you can get selective, and you can pick and choose what you're going to do."

In the early stages, an organization that operates on a fee-for-service basis might consider doing free projects and taking prospective sponsors to see the results.

But whether an organization charges for work or not, it is important, participants said, that the first projects be especially good ones that are highly visible.

It is also important for work coordinators to know that most public agencies are short-staffed and overburdened with work. New projects might be generated by tailoring them to fit the needs of such agencies.

One organization established an energetic campaign in which it mailed letters to prospective sponsors explaining the kinds of projects its corps could accomplish, then followed up with telephone calls. The result was that the corps had more potential sponsors than it could accommodate.

OPERATIONAL ISSUES

(A Discussion)

Workshop participants discussed a number of operational issues that can be divided into four categories: maintaining corps members' sense of identity with the group, assuring on-time delivery of material, coping with inclement weather and coping with corpsmember turnover. Their suggestions follow.

Maintaining a Sense of Identity

One goal of many corps is to develop a sense of teamwork and foster cooperation. Most corps organize work so that a group, team or crew of corpsmembers has to work together to accomplish the task. This discussion included ideas for fostering a sense of esprit de corps:

- Supply corpsmembers with uniforms, T-shirts or hats that identify them with the organization. (Others will begin to recognize the corps as well).
- Get corpsmembers together for common recreational activities, weekend activities or daily meetings. Morning physical training can help serve that purpose.
- Bring corpsmembers together for large projects.
- Publish newsletters that name individual corpsmembers and recognize their accomplishments.
- Hire enthusiastic, energetic supervisors and work coordinators who can motivate young adults to work cooperatively.

Assuring On-time Delivery

One of the problems that is common to many corps is getting materials and equipment to the project site in a timely fashion. This is usually the responsibility of the agency sponsoring the work. Discussion centered on ways to avoid or handle this problem.

- Get the sponsor to pick up and deliver the materials or convince the sponsor to give you the money to pay for the supplies. Although such an arrangement means more control, it also means more responsibility and work.
- Find out from the sponsor who the vendors are and contact them directly if deliveries are late.

- If the sponsor is paying for the project, arranging for workers to be paid by the hour will encourage sponsors to make deliveries on time. Otherwise, a sponsor will find himself in the position of having to pay workers who are waiting for supplies.

- Plan to begin a project only after the materials have been delivered and insist on seeing them before sending a crew to a worksite.

- Institute a joint work plan, which involves assessing the status of training, tools, materials and safety standards on a weekly basis.

Coping with Inclement Weather and Down Time

The problem of inclement weather is particularly acute among programs in the mid-west and on the east coast, but all programs share the problem of "down time." What do corps do when weather or other unforeseen problems prevent corpsmembers from working on assigned projects?

- Make sure a sponsor or crew supervisor has a back-up plan. Do not wait for it to rain or snow.

- Have projects ready that can be easily substituted for outdoor projects, and be sure supplies are readily available for those projects.

- Organize a kit for supervisors that will contain suggestions for activities that can be substituted for outdoor projects during inclement weather. The kit might include plans for writing journals, doing conservation awareness activities or working on educational projects.

- Develop and schedule work with the weather in mind; e.g., save outdoor projects that can be done in the rain.

Coping with Corpsmember Turnover

Most corps stress the development of good work habits and there fore set high behavior standards. While attrition rates vary -- depending on the crew supervisor, nature of project work, etc. -- most corps operators agreed that the turnover that results from enforcing corps policies creates problems for work projects. It is sometimes difficult to maintain the necessary crew strength to meet performance goals. However, most operators felt that it is important not to abandon standards, but to set them high, enforce them and cope with attrition. The following are some suggestions for maintaining this position:

- Anticipate attrition, determine average rates and hire enough corpsmembers to maintain the population required by work projects.
- Explain corps expectations to applicants.
- Require applicants to attend morning physical training sessions before being hired. If they fail to arrive on time, postpone the initial interview for a week or a month to indicate that your standards are firm.
- Openly announce firings and disciplinary actions to discourage unacceptable behavior.
- Institute a warning system that will let corpsmembers know when they are in danger of losing their jobs.
- Invite parents, probation officers or guardians to attend initial intake meetings. They can help influence corpsmembers to remain in the program.

TRACKING AND REPORTING

(A Discussion)

Most corps have learned the value of keeping track of their accomplishments. Some have simple systems, while others have more complex methods. The differences seem to depend on the age, size and complexity of the organization and the requirements of its authorizing legislation.

The information is generally gathered by supervisors in the field and is used to evaluate the worth of projects; write annual reports; respond to inquiries from state, local or federal officials; and write press releases.

Following are some examples of the kinds of information corps record:

- Project accomplishments from their early stages through completion; i.e., the numbers of trees planted, the miles of fencing constructed, the miles of streams cleared, etc.
- Number of hours worked.
- Safety reports and reports on unusual incidents and problems that occur at a work site.
- Alternative cost or estimated value of project.
- Costs of materials and other expenses, such as mileage and salaries.
- Names of sponsors, potential sponsors, directors of state and local agencies and legislators.
- Evaluations of or by corpsmembers and other employees.

CREATING VISIBILITY FOR PROJECTS

(A Discussion)

Visibility has two advantages: it draws political attention that will help a corps obtain funding, and it gains recognition for work crews and sponsors.

But generating positive press coverage requires planning, an understanding of what attracts the media and sometimes, more than a little creativity. Workshop participants offered a variety of suggestions.

Special Events

- Hold opening ceremonies at the beginning of a new work project and invite local and state officials to attend.
- Invite members of the media and local officials to participate in a project for a day alongside corpsmembers.
- Organize corpsmembers participation in major local events -- fairs, parades or marathons -- that will naturally attract the media and where corpsmembers will be seen in uniform.
- Involve the corps in "blitz projects" or "signature projects" in which the entire corps can work on a short-term, high-visibility project that requires little training and can be done quickly. Some examples are clean-up projects and service projects -- such as delivering food to the elderly or installing smoke detectors in low-income residents' homes.
- Stage an event to celebrate the completion of a project. Again, invite local officials.

Personal Appearances

- Arm crew supervisors and corpsmembers with information about the program in general and specific projects and encourage them to appear on local talk shows or speak to local organizations.
- Make telephone and face-to-face contact with specific representatives of the local media.
- Videotape a project in progress and show the tape to local organizations.

The Written Word

- Write press releases when a project begins and ends and at important points along the way.

- Write articles and offer them to local newspapers as feature stories.

- Name projects after the program. Then, every time the project receives publicity, the organization will receive publicity as well.

- Post signs at project sites that identify the program and indicate whether the project is completed or under way.

FEES FOR SERVICES

A Presentation By
Joanna Lennon, East Bay Conservation Corps

As public funds for project work become less and less available, it has become increasingly necessary for conservation corps to find other sources of money. For the East Bay Conservation Corps, one important source of money has been tapped by charging fees for services. A look at the development of East Bay's program can provide other youth conservation corps some insight into the contracting process.

The East Bay Conservation Corps began in 1983 as a summer employment program under the auspices of the YMCA. At that time, the program's budget was about $170,000. Of that total, $80,000 came from JTPA Title IIB funds, $60,000 came from donations by private foundations, and the remainder -- about $30,000 -- was secured through contracting for services.

In that first summer, East Bay operated an eight-week program involving about 95 youth working in nine crews. "The objective was to show the agencies (with whom East Bay contracted) that the work we did was so great it would benefit them to negotiate a bigger contract. And that's what happened," Lennon said.

By the end of the summer, the program was able to expand to a year-round program with three year-round crews. Today, about 80 percent of East Bay's $1.2 million budget is funded through fee for-service projects.

The first, and perhaps only, rule in contracting is that there is no established way to approach the process.

"There isn't a set formula to it. It has a lot to do with the person in your agency and how pushy they are, how savvy they are...It has to do with knowing what the situation is in each agency and how they are set up, how they can get you in their line budget," Lennon said. Contracting for services "takes time and it takes doing some research and it takes knowing who to ask -- but you learn how to do that."

Nonetheless, contracts generally take one of two forms. Either a corps will submit a bid to an agency to perform a specific project for a specific fee, or it will hire out to an agency for a specific length of time to do a variety of jobs, the details of which will be worked out between the corps and the agency. In either case, the contract may last from a few weeks to as much as a year.

The kinds of contracts that are arranged will vary greatly from corps to corps, but Lennon was able to offer some general advice.

First, she suggested, a corps should become familiar with the various agencies in its area and the kinds of work they do. That information can be gleaned by studying agencies' budgets -- to see whether a corps can tap into a specific line item -- or by looking at annual reports to determine the kinds of work an agency performs. Then a corps representative will want to become acquainted with the people in those agencies who are responsible for arranging for contract work.

Contracts can be used to pay for a variety of project costs, but these funds are most often used to pay for youth wages and the accompanying employment taxes. Lennon found that raising this kind of program revenue from sponsors can be a way to leverage funds from other sources. "Foundations would generally prefer to pay for support services," she said.

Agencies will often be agreeable to hiring youth corps for several reasons, she found. Often, their staffs are already overburdened or they are understaffed to perform the kinds of work they want to do. And some public agencies are encouraged to hire unemployed youth. In addition, conservation corps can often provide the work at a lower cost than other kinds of organizations.

"There is really a large backlog of maintenance work for city and land agencies that they could not afford to hire somebody to do," she said. "They couldn't hire any more full-time staff, so they were stuck with a certain amount of money and all this work to do to fulfill their mandate. A conservation corps fits into that slot very well. "The work they can get out of our crews they could not do otherwise."

She noted that conservation crews that come with good supervisors are especially attractive to public agencies. "If you can provide them a package where you have good supervision, they can help with the planning of the project; they don't have to worry about supervising a bunch of kids, and they get PR for it. They love it."

ENERGY CONSERVATION WORK

A Presentation By
David Boyd, California Conservation Corps

Energy conservation can include a broad range of activities. But the California Conservation Corps has found that two types of programs are most suitable for conservation corps projects. They are weatherization and recycling programs, and they can often operate together. Weatherization involves blowing insulation into attics, repairing broken doors and windows, caulking and weather-stripping and installing heat-flow restrictors on boilers and hot water heaters -- work that borders on rehabilitation.

In California, and perhaps other states as well, funding for these projects has come from three sources. The federal Department of Energy and the Department of Health and Human Services funnel funds to the states, which then distribute money to various agencies. Utility companies are also a source of funds. "They have found it is cheaper to conserve energy than to build new generators, and they've developed a whole host of innovative delivery mechanisms for conservation projects that can easily involve corpsmembers," Boyd said.

Southern California Edison and the CCC have worked together on one project in which portable electric heaters were distributed to elderly residents who live in large homes that are expensive to heat. In another program, corpsmembers have been taught to disconnect expensive central air-conditioning systems and replace them with less-expensive evaporative cooling units. "That program involves more expertise than weatherization because you get into plumbing, electrical work and carpentry, but training is easy because the work is standardized."

Other sources of funds are the operating budgets of school districts, other state agencies and local governments. "We've found that given the proper sales job, we've had a great deal of success in getting them to fund our projects."

There are two ways to proceed with energy projects -- by providing labor for an agency already doing energy work, or by obtaining funds to do an entire project. "It's certainly a lot easier to run an operation that you control all the aspects of than it is to try and interface with another organization." Advantages in running an entire project are that you have more control over personnel, materials and supplies, and training content. But there are disadvantages.

"Running an entire program involves promotion and outreach of the services, a high degree of accountability and record-keeping to verify people's incomes. And it involves purchasing material, technical site supervision and withstanding federal auditors.

"We've felt comfortable with installation, but we didn't feel our corpsmembers were sophisticated enough to go door-to-door to sell a program."

In either case, training must be constantly reinforced. "You can't place somebody on a crew and look for them to pick up the skills immediately, so our training program is on a quarterly basis. We have cycles. Every three months we start new people in training."

And it is important, the CCC found, for programs to progress slowly. "People of that age group and background need to have measurable benchmarks, where they can feel some success, where they can feel some accomplishment. Then, based on that, move into the next level of activity."

The CCC has combined a recycling program with weatherization by collecting newspapers -- which are converted into cellulose insulation -- in three counties. "Most low-income weatherization programs use cellulose insulations. It's one of the cheapest, so it fits within the cost guideline, and it can be blown in with an insulation blower, so it's easily installed in existing buildings."

"The newspaper is trucked directly to the factory, converted to cellulose insulation and then installed by corpsmembers, so we're involved in every aspect of it, except for the actual conversion of the insulation."

Boyd concluded by inviting interested participants to visit the CCC's Energy Center in Auburn, California.

SOCIAL SERVICE WORK

A Presentation By
Mary Bleiberg, City Volunteer Corps

Involvement in social service work provides an opportunity to promote corpsmembers' civic spirit, to give them an understanding of the needs of an area's residents, to improve their sense of self-worth and to relieve what may be a sense of alienation from society.

The City Volunteer Corps of New York City, the only corps in the U.S. currently involved in projects in which corpsmembers are working directly with needy populations, has incorporated some of those goals into a mission statement that says, in part, that the corps "provides services of real and lasting value to the City of New York in a manner that challenges young adults, promotes their personal development and enhances their educational opportunities."

Human service projects can be an important option, especially in urban areas like New York, where the needs of residents are great and high-impact physical projects are difficult because of the size of the area or because the climate interferes with long-term outdoor work.

In choosing human service projects, the CVC has identified several important criteria, many of them similar to the criteria developed for physical projects:

- The projects should be clearly focused so the volunteers can have a strong sense of completing a specific task.

- "Even if the overall long-term goal is to reduce the loneliness of senior citizens or increase their sociability or the likelihood of rehabilitation for some element of society, the initial project should be as concrete as possible. The need is ongoing, and the goal of a human service project will not be reached at once. But what we try to do in each human service project is find a very concrete need which becomes the focus for the project."

- The City Volunteer Corps organizes projects to allow the volunteers to work as a team. "We want to maintain the team concept. We've found that scattered sites don't work well with the team concept, even in social service projects."

- As in physical projects, visibility is important, both for the recognition of volunteers and for the political attention and community support the project can generate.

The project should provide face-to-face contact between the volunteers and the clients.

"Joining together with senior citizens to help paint their recreation center, for example, is an incredible way to start a human service project because after four or five days of everyone getting paint on themselves, they're old friends. Then you can get down to what we're really about, which is to try to reduce some of the loneliness in some of these people's lives.

"The human interaction will often come after a specific physical project has been completed. Potential clients may be more ready to interact with corpsmembers after they've seen them in the area performing a task. That initial project can be the basis for establishing trust."

The project has to fulfill an important need for the client, not just for the corps or another agency. "Make sure that it's the client, not the institution serving the client, that needs the service."

- Volunteers need to be given some skills and information to help them deal with people who are disabled, lonely or suffering in some other way. "Most 18 year-olds are not motivated or skilled enough to reach out to needy people without some starting point that training provides. They're afraid of other people's frailty, their smells; they're afraid of disease or clients' mental disability."

- Training should be on-going and should include frequent de-briefing sessions. "Every week, at least, they should be able to sit down with a skilled practitioner and say, 'This is what happened to me today. Did I do the right thing? Did I do the wrong thing?' In some cases, de-briefing sessions should be held daily."

- Careful scheduling is important because most human service projects are client-driven, that is, the service is initiated by the client. That means that alternative tasks have to be made available for the inevitable down time.

- It is also important to be certain that corps participants don't become clients of the agency sponsoring the project. "There are a lot of social workers in these human service projects, and they tend to view the workers as their clients very quickly. They try to take care of the kids, solve their problems. That can make the volunteers needy and debilitate them."

- And, finally, the security of the clients must be considered. "In physical projects, we're preoccupied primarily with the participant's safety. In human service projects, we have to consider the client's security as well, especially when they are physically or mentally disabled."

EMERGENCY WORK

A Presentation By
John Passerello,
California Office of Emergency Services

Unless its charter requires a corps to respond to emergencies, an organization has the option of volunteering its services. Deciding whether to exercise that option involves defining emergencies, examining the value of the corps' response and planning the response.

Defining an Emergency

Emergencies normally mean that human beings are suffering, either because their lives are endangered by fires, floods or earthquakes, or their property is threatened. Properly trained corpsmembers have responded to all of these situations. But emergencies may also involve less threatening conditions.

For example, earlier this year in Santa Rosa, thousands of gallons of raw sewage were dumped into the Russian River. Down stream, residents were forced to boil their water to protect themselves from bacteria. While the situation was not considered a true emergency by the State of California, the California Conservation Corps obtained emergency status to pass out water conservation kits to the city's residents.

In another instance in California, a sudden temperature change caused a major fish kill in a lake in a resort community in the northern part of the state. Thousands of dead fish littered the shore, and the CCC became involved in the clean-up. "An emergency depends on how you want to define it and whose emergency it really is," Passerello said.

Reasons for Responding

- Responding to emergencies helps establish esprit de corps.

  "It's the highest morale-building thing you can give them and the thing that will bring them the closest together." Assuming that your organizations across the nation are multi-racial and have both men and women and all economic groups, you have a hard time bringing them together on a closeknit functioning level, and responding to emergencies will help accomplish that."

- Responding to emergencies also helps in recruitment. "When young people see others like themselves doing something as challenging as fighting fires or working to help clean up after earthquakes, they are drawn to the organization."

- Responding to emergencies also helps a corps discover possible preventative projects. "If you can show people that you can prevent an emergency, that's an added plus. An example might be seeding a hillside that was heavily eroded in a storm so that erosion won't happen again."
- Responding to emergencies helps corpsmembers obtain training, because in most emergencies -- forest fires, for example -- corpsmembers will be working alongside a firefighting agency or a rescue group. "You can be trained by them, led by them, advised by them."

Preparing for Emergencies

It is important in preparing for emergencies to first understand the kinds of emergencies that are likely to occur in a corps' area. For instance, if the land is flat, the potential emergencies may be heavy snowfalls or tornadoes. Those near coastal areas might expect flooding from heavy rain or hurricanes.

During the planning stages, it is important to consider historical patterns -- to know, for example, the cycle of earthquakes or that forest fires often follow droughts. Some emergencies are predictable.

It is also important to know where the population is concentrated and who will be most affected by which kinds of emergencies.

Good planning will also involve knowing which agencies are responsible for handling different kinds of emergencies. The information will serve two purposes: It will help a corps know where to obtain funding for emergency responses, and it will help a corps know whom to contact when it wants to volunteer its services.

Once the corps has decided it wants to respond to emergencies, it should provide some training in advance for corpsmembers and anticipate the kinds of equipment that it should have on hand for emergencies. "Don't ever sell yourself to another agency [claiming that] that you can respond to their emergencies and then fall on your face and have the corps turn tail and run because they've never faced fire before."

Finally, it is important for corps organizers to know what agencies can be relied on for back-up in the event corpsmembers are confronted with unexpectedly hazardous situations. "Responsibility for corpsmembers' lives is on your shoulders."

As a side note, Passerello distinguished between "good" emergencies -- in which a corps is willing and able to help and accomplishes its task -- and "bad" emergencies -- in which a corps has little chance of contributing in a positive way, has too little to do or in which the solution is contrary to the corps' philosophy. An example of the latter is fighting insect infestation -- where eradication may conflict with a corps' environmental concerns.

SPECIALTY CREWS

A Presentation by
Jerry Kolker, Public/Private Ventures
and
Harvey Morrison, Marin Conservation Corps

Specialty crews, such as those in projects of Ventures in Community Improvement (VICI) developed by Public/Private Ventures and those in the Marin Conservation Corps, can offer an important option for conservation corps looking to expand their programs beyond the traditional conservation corps model.

VICI was begun by Public/Private Ventures in 1978. Its goals were to produce lasting physical improvements and to provide on-the-job training in the construction trades for disadvantaged young adults. These goals are often realized through the renovation of deteriorated housing.

VICI has always adhered to a few basic, but crucial, principles that differ slightly from those of traditional conservation corps.

- Trainees work in small crews -- usually no more than six workers -- that foster peer support;
- Union or certified journey persons head the crews to provide close supervision and mentoring;
- Rigorous production standards determine the quality of the work;
- A thorough placement campaign is conducted for trainees at the end of their nine-month training cycle;
- All VICI sites operate through a partnership, often involving local unions or trade associations, a government training or housing agency, a work contractor, local foundations and other community organizations.

Since the early days, Kolker said, "We found that we ran the program very rigorously and lost a lot of kids, but the kids who graduated from the program got jobs."

VICI programs have included the painting of vandalized public schools in New York City; the renovation of pre-Civil War homes in Cincinnati, Ohio, which were then sold to low- and moderate-income families; the renovation of sub-standard housing in Oakland, California; and the installation of cable television connections in schools, libraries and public housing in Tampa, Florida.

Kolker said an experimental merger is taking place now between the California Conservation Corps and VICI. "What we've tried out here is taking the conservation corps model, which already provides a good work ethic and is intensive, and grafting onto it a skill-intensive VICI program."

In one project, crews are working to renovate a building that has been slated for demolition at the Knowland Park Zoo. Kolker said P/PV has found that although the programs can be expensive and require a longer commitment from corpsmembers, they result in corpsmembers who are more employable because of the skills they learned.

The Marin Conservation Corps has incorporated specialty crew work into its regular conservation corps program. The first specialty crew was a tree-surgery crew. Since then, other specialty crews have been added to work on landscaping and construction.

"The specialty crew has become a step in the corpsmembers development process," Morrison said. He said the results have been "less absenteeism, fewer problems with attendance, fewer problems with safety and a better involvement in the overall program on the part of corpsmembers."

He said on-the-job training is combined with four hours of classroom time. Specialty crews are hired out at a rate of $8.50 per hour and the ratio of supervisors to corpsmembers is high.

Regular corpsmembers are able to "graduate" to specialty crew work after a year in the conservation corps program. "I think that people who are a little bit older and more mature approach it (specialty crew work) a little more seriously, and you get that level of maturity if you have someone in your regular program for a year. They've developed the right work habits and you know that they are ready to go on. If somebody isn't working out well in a month, we bump them back down."

Morrison said his corps' specialty crews have a high placement rate. "It's about 80 percent going out of this program, and people have consistently high incomes that average $5.80 to $10 per hour."

FUTURE PLANS

At end of the workshop, participants were asked to establish some short-term and long-term goals derived from information exchanged during the workshop.

Long-range goals included plans to:

- o Increase visibility
- o Develop a quarterly newsletter for corpsmembers and alumni;
    - Develop a plan for acquiring T-shirts, uniforms and transportation for corpsmembers;
    - Post signs at project sites and hold special events;
    - Have a media person participate as a crew leader for a day; and
    - Begin public relations work with unions.
- o Institute fees for service through contracts with private, for-profit corporations;
- o Improve tracking and reporting systems;
- o Write an emergency response policy;
- o Look into the possibility of creating specialty crews;
- o Begin sending out letters of agreement to sponsors one week before a project begins;
- o Develop a human service project that will allow corpsmembers to work face-to-face with the elderly; and
- o Develop a better orientation program for corpsmembers.

Short-term goals included plans to:

- o Develop a clear sponsor project application package and a comprehensive contract for sponsors;
- o Place a logo on corps vans and purchase T-shirts for corpsmembers;

- Revise the project monitoring system;
- Hire worksite coordinators; and
- Include pictures of corpsmembers and comments from them in annual reports.

II. ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

INTRODUCTION

The workshop, June 11 through 13, was held in Montreal at Ile Perrot, the training center of Katimavik, the Canadian corps. Fifteen representatives of 11 youth conservation corps programs attended.

Agenda topics included:

- Funding
- Collaborating with other agencies and institutions
- Building community and political support
- Involving the private sector
- Working with organized labor
- Building public awareness

Resource persons were:

- Gene Binder, designer, Texas Conservation Corps
- Marian Decker, owner of a New York City public relations firm and consultant to the City Volunteer Corps
- Jack Dugan, former director, California Conservation Corps
- Stan Hemphill, financial assistance manager, Dade County Parks and Recreation Department; instructor, National Parks and Recreation Association's Revenue Management School
- Jerry Kolker, Public/Private Ventures
- Nancy Peterson, consultant, San Francisco Conservation Corps and East Bay Conservation Corps

The following report of the workshop includes highlights of the presentations and discussions, and concludes with a list of sources of more specific information on the topics discussed.

FUNDRAISING

A Presentation By
Stan Hemphill,
Dade County (Florida) Parks and Recreation Department
National Parks and Recreation Association
Revenue Management School

"Money. Cash. Dollars. Revenue. No matter what we choose to call it, [service] organizations cannot function effectively without it, regardless of how dedicated (their) policymakers, executives, employees or volunteers," Hemphill said.

And today, largely because of the political climate in Washington, public funds for non-profit service organizations have become more difficult to obtain. In addition, social service organizations have grown in number and many have become highly sophisticated in their efforts to obtain more money from a smaller pool of public funds.

Consequently, the competition is keen. It has become necessary for organizations to develop a coherent and well-planned approach to obtaining and using money from a variety of sources. Social service organizations must switch from what Hemphill termed a "chase-money-syndrome" to creative money management.

A chase-money-syndrome exists, he said, when an organization "is trying to secure resources for what may be a very realistic community need, but has no concept of how to advance (its) approach beyond trying to stumble onto a likely supporter." Seldom are such efforts productive.

"You have to decide that your approach to the management of public and non-profit revenues will be organized, thorough, multi-faceted and go far beyond the typical chase-money-syndrome of some service organizations.

"Each one of us should pledge to help assure that a carefully formulated and properly implemented approach is taken to achieve the maximum return from our revenue decisions and our revenue efforts."

The first step in that approach is to become familiar with various types of revenue and their sources. Then a corps must determine its needs and priorities, match them with possible funding sources, determine who in the organization will be responsible for tapping those sources and develop a plan for obtaining and using the money over the short and long term.

Throughout the process, corps will find it useful to form alliances with a multitude of agencies and institutions.

Types of Revenue

In his presentation, Hemphill identified eight types of revenue. They are:

1. Cash
2. Land
3. Facilities
4. Equipment
5. Materials
6. Supplies
7. Personnel
8. Services

Land, facilities, equipment, materials, supplies, personnel and services can be as valuable -- and sometimes more valuable -- than cash.

"If someone suddenly gave an organization $150,000 worth of equipment, for example, that is just as valuable as $150,000 in cash, because you don't have to go through the administrative headache of acquiring equipment you might need."

The same principle applies to donations of supplies, land or personnel.

Classifications of Revenue

Hemphill identified four classifications of revenue that can be tapped, to a greater or lesser extent, by conservation corps. They are:

1. Compulsory resources -- money received primarily by governmental agencies because of their taxing or regulatory powers -- include:

    a. Taxes, such as property, income, sales and franchise taxes;

    b. Special assessments, in which money is collected to benefit a particular project or geographical area within a jurisdiction. Examples include funds collected by a fire district, garbage district or landscaping district;

    c. Dedication ordinances, in which, for example, large corporations contribute money in lieu of tax money to local governments; and

    d. Fines and penalties collected by state or local agencies.

    It may be possible, Hemphill said, for conservation corps to persuade local or state governmental entities to earmark some portion of their compulsory funds for youth-oriented organizations.

For example, "you might be able to set up some kind of a mechanism where 10 percent of all parking fines paid in your community go into a fund for youth conservation-type programs."

2. Earned income, including:

   a. Fees and charges, such as entrance fees, admission fees, user fees, rental fees, sales charges, license and permit fees and special service fees.

      "Maybe a corps can work with the local parks and recreation department and sell the idea that if they have an entrance fee into their parks, for example, some of that money will be set aside for youth-oriented projects."

   b. Investment interest.

      It may be possible to set aside a portion of a corps' funds in an interest-earning account that will become a permanent investment. At the same time, a corps might be able to persuade a bank or savings and loan association to donate money to such a fund.

3. Contractual receipts, including cash and non-cash revenues received as a result of legal agreements with second parties about properties, facilities or service enterprises.

4. Financial assistance, which may be the most important source of funding for conservation corps, includes:

   a. Grants, both project grants allocated for specific projects and block grants allocated to specific geographical areas.

   b. Entitlements, both general and specific. In general entitlements such as revenue sharing, a state or local government receives funds which it may then allocate to specific programs. In specific entitlements, funds are earmarked for specific programs at the time of their initial release.

      (Conservation corps may be able to initiate programs in their states that specifically fund youth conservationtype programs, Hemphill said.)

   c. Special appropriations, in which legislators seek funds for specific programs in their communities.

d. Donations in the form of cash, supplies, personnel, etc.

e. Planned gifts, including wills, stocks, annuities, etc.

Sources of Revenue

In his presentation, Hemphill identified five sources of revenue:

1. Governmental agencies at the city, county, regional, state, national and international level.

2. Philanthropic foundations, including family foundations, community foundations, corporate foundations, special purpose foundations and general purpose foundations.

   Libraries have publications that list foundations and the kinds of projects they are interested in supporting. By studying those lists, corps organizers will be able to find foundations that are interested in serving youth.

3. Commercial businesses, other than major corporations, are often willing to make contributions, although those contributions may be rather small. The businesses operate at the local, regional, national or even international level. An example is supermarket chains. By establishing a good relationship at the local level, a corps may be able to obtain larger and larger donations by moving gradually up the organization ladder.

4. Volunteer groups, including local garden clubs, conservation clubs, church clubs, senior citizens clubs, etc., have a great deal of time, energy and expertise that they are eager to donate to other causes. The organizations often include retired people who may have worked in a particular field -- such as accounting -- for many years and would be willing to donate their time and knowledge to a corps.

5. Interested individuals, including the recipients of corps services, who may be willing to donate time or expertise to a corps.

Tapping the Sources

At this point in the process, a corps should be identifying its needs and establishing its priorities. It will have to determine whether the money it receives will be spent for capital improvements, operational expenses or investments; and it will have to organize its spending plans on an annual and long-range basis. Then a corps should begin to match those needs with specific sources of funds. In so doing, it should decide which sources can provide the most money for the least amount of time and effort. Simultaneously, it must decide which persons in its organization will be responsible for tapping the difficult sources of funds.

When a corps becomes very sophisticated in its fund-raising efforts, it might consider appointing different people within its organization to seek corporate donations, to make contact with volunteer groups, to apply for government grants, etc. Or, it might even consider hiring a professional fund-raiser to take charge of that aspect of the operation. In either case, it is important, Hemphill said, to involve as many people as possible within the corps and to involve them as early as possible in the financial planning stages.

Once a corps has decided to apply for funds for a specific purpose -- from a governmental agency, for example -- it is ready to begin what Hemphill said is an eight-step application process.

Step 1, the request initiation. This step in the process actually begins when an organization identifies its needs, establishes its priorities and has determined which source is likely to provide the funds to meet those needs.

Step 2, the request organization. During this phase, the person responsible for making the application should notify the source of the funds that he or she will be submitting the application. It is also time to obtain the most recent guidelines and application forms, to determine the scope of the project for which the funds are being obtained and accumulate all the information and materials that will be needed to submit the request.

Step 3, the request preparation. The request should be tailored to the specific funding source for which it is being prepared. It is important in this phase, Hemphill said to "put yourself in the position of the reviewer. Nobody wants to study or listen to a standardized, impersonal plea for revenue that has obviously been submitted to many other sources in a shotgun fashion." All the information in the request should be consistent, believable and relevant, and should be pleasing to the eye and the ear.

Step 4, the request submission. In this phase, the person submitting the request will have to decide three things: whether the request will be submitted through verbal, written or visual presentation; whether it will be submitted by taking it to the source or by having the source visit the corps offices; and whether it will be mailed or presented in person. Hemphill said the most successful requests are those that combine written, verbal and visual information and are presented in person on the requesting organ ization's "home turf."

After the request is submitted, the person responsible for the request should make reasonably timed inquiries about the progress of the review.

Step 5, project approval. In some cases, the requesting organization will be required to negotiate a legal agreement when the financing is approved.

Step 6, project progression. When the project is ready to begin, the corps representatives should meet to review their individual duties and be certain they understand the requirements of the funding source. It is important in this phase to start the project on time, keep good documentation of all expenditures and deliver information to the benefactor whenever it may be due.

Step 7, project completion. At this stage, it is necessary to ascertain that all responsibilities to the benefactor have been fulfilled.

Step 8, project follow-up. At this stage, the project should be evaluated, both for its administration and the service it provided. It is also time to thank the benefactor, both verbally and in writing, for the financial assistance.

In his closing remarks, Hemphill suggested that organizations begin building their financial systems slowly, and likened that growth to a "golden stairway":

"Every step you take in ascending a set of stairs has two significant results. You improve your level, while at the same time stabilizing your position.

"Through your financial management system, you should work to gradually increase the amount of additional resources you obtain. This can occur, he said, by deciding to tap new sources of revenue, involving more staff in the process, re-evaluating the organization's goals and objectives or using a new technique to attract new funding sources.

"As each new element is added to the system, you should also make sure you properly manage each project. Such an approach will result in continuous, controlled growth of your financial system."

FUNDING SOURCES

A Presentation By
Nancy Peterson
Consultant, East Bay and San Francisco Conservation Corps

Six types of funding sources have been effectively used by conservation corps in California. They are: contracts or fees for service; Community Development Block Grants; Job Training Partnership Act funds; state funds; general foundation and corporate donations; and donations from volunteer groups.

It has become more than ever necessary to tap a variety of funding sources as public funds become less reliably available.

Contracts or Fees for Service

In contracting, conservation corps receive full or partial payment from project sponsors for the work they do.

The East Bay Conservation Corps has found, Peterson said, that there is tremendous variation in the kinds of contracts that can be negotiated, depending on the availability of matching funds, agency budgets, needs and the jurisdiction's authority.

But generally, they fall into one of two categories: either a crew contracts with an agency or organization for a period of time to do a variety of projects, or a corps bids on a specific task and is then required to complete that task during a specified time period and at a specified cost.

Local corps have been able to make such arrangements with cities, counties, federal agencies, non-profit organizations and special funding districts, Peterson said, and through contracting, have been able to pay for such things as supplies, materials, transportation costs and salaries of corpsmembers. Most sponsors prefer not to pay overhead costs.

There is no established way to generate contracts. Potential sponsors must be identified and approached, proposals developed, credibility proven, contracts written and approval obtained.

It is helpful to know, however, that many public agencies with which such arrangements can be made are often short-staffed and have a backlog of work to be done. They can be persuaded to contract with youth conservation corps because of the benefits to young people.

In seeking contracts with sponsors, corps organizers will be more successful if they seek projects that do not threaten to displace other workers.

In doing contract work, corps must work especially hard to establish their credibility and to balance the production needs of a contract with their youth development goals. They also must learn to accurately estimate project costs and schedules in order to avoid major cost overruns and ensure fair charges.

Contracts can be negotiated in one of several forms: letters of agreement, purchase orders or cooperative agreements.

Community Development Block Grant Funds

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, developed under the federal Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, is administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The department distributes the funds to cities, based on a formula, and the cities distribute the funds locally.

The federal government has stipulated that the money must be used to benefit low- and moderate- income residents, to fight urban blight or to alleviate an emergency condition that threatens public health and safety.

These grants can be a source of funding for corps that operate in urban areas, Peterson said. Most of the funding the San Francisco and East Bay Conservation corps has obtained has been for physical improvement projects.

Obtaining the funding can be a complex process and may require a staff person who is knowledgeable about fundraising and securing political support, because the final decision to grant the funds for a project is made by the city administrators.

There is keen competition for the money. In administering block grant funds, a program must adhere to strict eligibility criteria for projects, as well as cumbersome administrative guidelines which must satisfy both federal and local guidelines.[1]

Job Training Partnership Act Funds

The federal Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) of 1982, which replaced the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA), can provide funds for corps on a limited basis.

The funding is coordinated by state employment and training offices, Peterson said, and allocated based on a formula to cities, counties or other geographical areas. Local Private Industry Councils distribute the funds based on federal, state and local policies and needs.

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[1] Corps should keep in mind that these funds are subject to Congressional action every year and therefore could be discontinued at any time.

The funds can support training, education, job placement, summer youth wages, small stipends and limited support services.[2]

The act requires programs to target the economically disadvantaged, and local industry councils often establish additional targets such as minority groups, youth, women or displaced workers. JTPA funds also call for careful certification of eligibility requirements of individuals enrolled in the program -- proof of income, residence, etc.

State Funds

Local conservation corps in California were able to tap into state funds in October 1984, when the governor of California signed a senate bill which encouraged the CCC to increase its service to ethnic minority youth, particularly high school drop-outs, Peterson said.

Local corps were able to participate in the development of the legislation by making their needs known to the legislators who were developing the bill, and worked with the CCC to have impact on the distribution of the funds at the local level.

Although the funding source is very specific to California, local and state corps elsewhere in the country may be able to develop similar kinds of legislation that can be a source of funds.

"I think this is an example of how the legislative process can be greatly influenced by local people, which doesn't often happen," Peterson said. "Many times we're afraid of the legislative process."

Foundations and Corporations

Foundation and corporate grants have been used by corps in California to a large extent to supplement more restrictive public funds, Peterson said. Each foundation or corporation has specific priorities and policies in awarding funds that can be gleaned from lists found in local libraries. In the Bay Area, such funds have been used for start-up needs, planning, program development and expansion, development of corpsmember programs and general operating costs.

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[2] Wages can be paid by JTPA funds, but with limitations. The youth service corps design meets and exceeds the criteria for "Exemplary Youth Programs" in Section 205 of the JTPA legislation. But paid participation for JTPA-eligible youth enrolled in Title IIA, year-round programs is limited to 500 hours. This would translate, for example, into approximately four months of participation, if corpsmembers work a 30-hour week.

Local foundations and corporations are the most likely targets at first, but national organizations can be targeted if the program for which funding is sought is likely to be considered a state wide or national model. More than other funding sources, corporations and foundations will want to know the benefits to their organizations in agreeing to fund projects, and personal contact with members of the organizations can help in obtaining funds.

Although the funds must be carefully tracked and reports of their use must be submitted to the funding organizations, the Bay Area corps have found that they provide the most flexibility and the greatest reward for the administrative time spent.

Donated Assistance

"The Bay Area's local conservation corps have benefited tremendously from a wide variety of in-kind support," Peterson said. That support has included rent-free space, legal assistance, accounting/financial services, development of a program logo, on-loan executives and volunteers. Donations have included tools, building materials, hard hats, first aid supplies, vehicles, computers, etc.

In general, no specific process exists for obtaining donated assistance or material, Peterson said: "Such support not only provides valuable services or products, but also results in a commitment on the part of the participating business, individual, non-profit organization or public agency. A program should not depend on such support but can benefit from it if effectively managed."

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PRO BONO SERVICES

(A Discussion)

During the workshop, corps representatives discussed a wide range of pro bono and in-kind services they have been able to obtain from a variety of sources in their areas. The services have come from families of corpsmembers, sponsors, local businesses, public agencies, schools and other sources in a community.

Participants suggested that as corps increase their credibility among various elements of the community, they can ask for -- and receive -- even more in the way of free or in-kind services. Although needs and potential for pro bono services may vary from corps to corps, a representative of the California Conservation Corps said: "One of the things I learned in the CCC is that we didn't ask for very much at the beginning and as we asked for a few more things -- and as our credibility developed over the years and the relationships became fairly personal at the local level -- there were more opportunities we began to explore."

The Community

A wide range of community organizations can be used to refer potential members to the corps, participants said. Many of these same organizations can supply day-care services, mental health services, drug and alcohol rehabilitation services to participants once they've joined.

In one case, a local library offered tutoring to corpsmembers, donated books and helped arrange credit courses at a local high school. In another case, the local Red Cross arranged to teach a course to corpsmembers in cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

Community groups have also helped with fund-raising projects for local corps, and community organizations have donated supplies and even buildings for use by the corps. And, community groups have volunteered the services of members of their organizations who had expertise in such areas as accounting and law.

Sponsors

Sponsors can be persuaded to provide a wide range of services beyond the work they may pay for, including transportation, equipment, supplies and food.

One corps received cash contributions to its general fund from sponsors who became involved in projects. Another corps obtained special training in the construction of log cabins by building shelters in the Adirondacks. Another corps received instruction for its members in masonry skills and sod hut construction.

Sponsors can also write letters of support to legislators and local public officials and help corps obtain press coverage.

Public Agencies and Schools

Public agencies and schools can be an important source of free training for corpsmembers.

Public agencies have taught fire science, first aid and environmental courses. Local colleges and high schools have provided GED preparation classes, resume writing and career planning courses and made presentations to corpsmembers about opportunities available for higher education.

Local Businesses

Local businesses have been persuaded to make donations of food to work crews. In one case, corps organizers persuaded a local bank to cash corpsmembers' checks without charging a fee.

Families

While some local corps organizers felt that families could not be relied upon to provide support for corpsmembers, a corps in Minnesota said family members participated in a letter-writing campaign that the corps felt was largely responsible for reducing proposed cuts in state funding to the organization.

PRIVATE SECTOR FUNDING

A Presentation By
Gene Binder,
Governor's Office of Exemplary Programs for Youth, Texas
(Mr. Binder was closely involved with the founding of the Texas Conservation Corps).

Despite political changes in Washington, the federal government is still the largest source of funds for education and training in the United States, Binder said. This year, 900 domestic programs are funded by the federal government.

But the competition for federal money is increasingly keen, and youth corps organizers would be wise to vary their funding sources by involving the private sector. Furthermore, money obtained from federal programs can be used to leverage even more money from private sources, Binder said:

The public-private partnership is very important in youth programming because there's a lot of interest in the private sector in assisting people who run the good youth job training programs.

We (in Texas) found that by combining federal dollars that traditionally go to the poor and disadvantaged, we were able to leverage those dollars successfully to bring in the private sector.

Binder said private funds come primarily from three sources: foundations, corporations and individuals.

Foundations

About 20,000 foundations across the country last year donated $4 billion to social causes, Binder said. Of those 20,000 foundations, about 400 donated 90 percent of the money. He commented:

"It's your job, to find out who they are, because they really are interested in what (youth corps) are doing...they have the same priorities you have. They are interested in youth, they're interested in unemployment, they're interested in social causes and they're interested in mental health."

It's important, however, to understand a foundation's priorities before asking for money, and it's helpful to become acquainted with members of a foundation's board of directors and to make face-to-face contact before formally applying for a grant. Binder said:

"It's hard to ask for money, and it's not going to get any easier. Before you go to find these dollars, you've got to obtain some information on the people you're going to go to.

"Don't go to a foundation that cares nothing about job training and ask them for job training money, because they're going to be very polite and ask you to leave.

"You also need to know the average size of grants that those foundations (or corporations or individuals) give. Don't go in and ask for $10,000 when the average size grant is $50,000."

Corporations

There are about 1.5 million corporations in the United States, Binder said, and last year about 600,000 of them donated money to social causes.

Corporations primarily prefer to give for self-interest, Binder said. "They like to show the community, their board of directors, [and] their employees that they're putting money back into something that they're going to benefit from...Somehow you've got to be able to show them that if they invest in your program, they will get a return." Some of those returns can include tax write-off benefits or donations to social organizations and training programs for potential employees.

Job training programs such as conservation corps can produce an employee pool from which corporations can draw, and that point can be used to convince corporations to donate to youth conservation programs. Last year, Binder said, corporations spent $100 million on training new employees.

"We tell them that...we're going to turn out a new generation of employees -- employees who are ready to go to work -- employees who will get to work on time, employees that will have the kind of character they're looking for."

Job-training programs such as youth conservation corps programs can also help corporations further their affirmative action goals by providing, in some cases, a statewide pool of potential employees.

Binder also suggested that private corporations can be involved in donating equipment and expertise to corps programs before they are actually asked to make large cash donations. By involving them gradually, he said, they have an opportunity to become familiar with -- and even excited about -- the concept of the youth conservation corps.

Individuals

Last year, Binder said, individuals donated almost 54 billion dollars to causes and special self-interests. That money came from bequests, alumni and friends.

Universities, for example, have relied on alumni and friends for substantial donations. As youth conservation corps mature, they may be able to tap those sources as well.

In closing, Binder noted that by 1990, $100 billion will be available from private sector sources.

"How much of that money will you get?" he asked.

BUILDING POLITICAL SUPPORT

A Presentation By
Jack Dugan
Deputy Chief Director of Crime Prevention,
Attorney General's office, California
Former Director, California Conservation Corps

Building support among politicians at the local and state level requires attention to detail, patience, honesty and knowing that the business of a democratic government is personal, Dugan said in opening remarks at the workshop.

"Working with elected officials in a legislative body is probably more of a full-time job than you think it is," he said. Attention to detail involves knowing that "Turf is important in government. You have to understand it, you have to respect it; you can become impatient with it, but it's part of life."

Part of understanding "turf" is knowing who local and state legislators are, what their political relationships to each other are, what their personal and professional likes and dislikes are. It is also important to know who in government is responsible for achieving what goals.

"Do you know committee members? Who's on the Senate Appropriations Committee, for example?" he asked. "Do you know his past, how old his wife is, when his birthday is? Do you know his personal philosophy? You should."

Dugan also said it is important for corps organizers to understand what may be an informal chain of command between locally elected and appointed officials and state elected and appointed officials so as to avoid offending lower level officials by going over their heads.

He also stressed the importance of keeping elected officials informed about what a corps is doing. "Tell them the good news, tell the bad news. There are no secrets. And they'd like to hear it from the boss, not from subordinates."

Dugan suggested sending legislators newspaper articles that reflect the work a corps is doing, sending occasional fact sheets and obtaining appropriate legislative reports.

Invite legislators to important ceremonies held by a corps, he suggested, and invite them for informal visits to a corps headquarters or project sites. He also suggested that corps organizers keep legislators informed of special accomplishments by corpsmembers in their districts.

And, he said, it is important for corps organizers to respond quickly -- within 48 hours -- to inquiries from elected officials and to thank them promptly for any services they render to a corps.

When one participant suggested that participants can be helpful in keeping in contact with legislators, Dugan said: "The best lobbyists, we find, are the participants because they don't have to follow the bureaucratic network to get to the legislature... Our participants have frequent and easy access to the people who represent their areas, and we do everything to try and encourage them to make that contact," he said. "At first, we were afraid of what the kids might say, but then we found that for some reason, the kids never let you down."

Dugan also stressed the importance of being able to communicate with government leaders well in writing. "You have to find somebody who writes well. Nothing happens in government that isn't preceded by a piece of paper, and you should keep a constant flow of informational paper going. Don't use bureaucratic language. Use the English language clearly."

Finally, Dugan encouraged corps leaders to be honest and patient when dealing with government officials. "Don't ever lie to them," he said, "...and know that the business of government takes time."

WORKING WITH LABOR UNIONS

A Presentation By
Jerry Kolker,
Public/Private Ventures

In the heavily industrialized cities of the Northeast, working with labor unions is a necessity, but even in other areas where unions are less strong, building a relationship with them can benefit a youth conservation corps in several ways.

"What we have found is that the involvement of unions helps give young people credentials. I'm not just talking about the formal system, such as apprenticeships. I'm talking about the informal system of having someone vouch for a corpsmember.

"One thing that VICI (Ventures in Community Improvement -- a project developed by Public/Private Ventures that involves a partnership with unions) taught us was that in 70 percent of the cases, the kids got jobs because a (union) journeyman called and made a referral.

"Poor people don't get jobs through the newspaper and they don't get jobs through traditional ways. And most important, kids don't have a network."

Unions also give corps "some kind of legitimacy." The skill identification that takes place when you've got a union plumber, union carpenter, etc., really has an enormous impact on the quality of work and the standard of work that's being maintained."

The relationship between the unions and job training programs like youth conservation corps helps the unions by putting them in contact with youth who can become valuable members of their organizations, and that point can be used to encourage union involvement.

However, establishing relationships with unions is difficult, and it is important to involve them early in the planning stages of a project. "The unions are probably the most sensitive institutions that I have ever dealt with as far as feeling that they got left out of a process."

It is also important to concentrate efforts to establish a rapport with unions at the local level. "We found that often the antipathy between the local level and the national level of union leadership is worse than the antipathy that exists between local and federal government. We quickly learned that endorsement at the national level meant nothing."

Corps organizers must also be sensitive to events occurring within labor organizations. For instance, it is unwise to seek labor endorsements during contract negotiations. Another problem is allowing management to make contact with the unions on a corps' behalf.

"Don't get yourself in a position where the parks department, for example, says 'We'll have to talk to the unions about that,' because you really can't count on it. If you really want it done, contact them yourself. Make sure the parks department knows about it, but no matter how well people get along, there is a fundamental adversarial role between unions and management and you don't want to get into the position of having someone else represent what you want to do."

One of the fundamental concerns for labor unions in dealing with project work by conservation corps is that their workers will be displaced. But unions should be made to see that the number of workers a corps employs is too small to have any serious effect on the local employment picture.

"We don't really amount to an army, we amount to a platoon someplace. Efforts should be made to convince union leaders of that fact. The issue of displacement is an incredibly volatile issue, but this is a time when numbers are going to work to your benefit."

He also suggested that corps organizers be aware that unions want the same kind of benefits that other groups involved in corps projects want. "They want to be on the advisory board; they want to be able to take credit and show that they've helped a kid to get a job; they want their picture taken."

Kolker also cautioned corps organizers against expecting formal endorsements from unions, and suggested that corps will probably have to be satisfied with an informal relationship. "You're not going to get a letter that guarantees that the union's going to hire these kids. You'll probably only be able to get a letter that says they'll support the program and cooperate in every possible way."

In closing, Kolker said there are some advantages in dealing with unions. "I'd much rather deal with unions than with bureaucracies. With unions, you know where they stand; they're very clear about their biases. In a large bureaucracy, a million regulations pop up at you when you least expect it."

CREATING PUBLICITY AND AWARENESS

A Presentation By
Marian Decker
Marian Decker Public Relations of New York

Publicity, Decker said, is the delivery of information. It's communication, and in some cases persuasion, either of the general public or of a very specific public. And it employs a few basic elements -- written materials like brochures, information or press kits, annual reports, newsletters; visual materials, such as photographs, slides or video tapes; or events, such as seminars and workshops.

But one of the most important elements is media exposure, "because without that, you really have a tough time getting the word out."

A corps is fortunate if it has a director with a knack for publicity, but even if that is not the case, a corps can successfully publicize itself and its projects if it has a good system. That system begins with the knowledge that a corps must continually inform the public about what it is doing, "and you have to do it as you go along, not just when something special happens."

In beginning to establish a system, a corps should ask itself three basic questions:

What audience do you want to reach?

What message do you hope to communicate?

What do you hope to accomplish?

The audience should include the general public, potential sponsors, potential corpsmembers, legislators, alumni, parents and educators. Other potential audiences include a corps' own staff -- "Often people don't communicate well within their own organizations" -- conservation advocates, youth organizations, foundations and members of the business community.

The message should be that conservation programs work on many levels and for many reasons. "They tap the idealism and altruism of youth; they offer a challenge; they aid the environment; they offer the disadvantaged a way into the mainstream of American society."

The basic goal of all corps should be to establish name recognition and to persuade people to associate in a positive way with the work that corps do.

One of the first rules in attempting to reach an audience and communicate with it is to keep the message simple. "People don't focus, listen or read for very long, so your job is to make whatever it is you're going to say brief, succinct and simple." A slogan or tag line can help achieve that goal, as can a set of themes or sentences that are repeated.

Once that brief message has been developed, Decker said, it is important to repeat it in written materials, speeches, personal conversations and other presentations. "Repetition is how you get the message across."

In developing the message, Decker cautioned, avoid saying too much -- and therefore communicating nothing -- or failing to say it often enough.

Written Materials

In preparing written materials, a corps should avoid spending a lot of money and, wherever possible, seek volunteer talent and donations of supplies. In any case, written materials should carry some kind of identifiable logo, be well-designed, clearly written and brief.

Materials should carry a definition of the program and its goals, a biography of the director and attachments that might include a speech given on your behalf or newspaper clippings about the corps programs.

The written messages can include annual reports, formal news letters or less formal letters to friends of the organization. The latter two forms of communication are best used to keep interested parties up to date on specific projects and the status of the program in general.

Other Forms of Communication

Decker also suggested that corps use visual aids to tell their stories.

"Visuals -- such as slide shows and photographs -- may often tell your story better than the written word."

Although the print media may be the best source of publicity for corps -- because their message is lasting and can be reproduced and mailed to other sources -- television coverage can have a high impact in a short time. Radio is also useful, especially in recruitment, because it is listened to by youth. Both radio and television are especially valuable in reaching people who cannot read.

Reaching the Media

The media provide the best communication for a corps because it involves "having someone else tell your story for you."

There are several methods for attracting media attention:

- Press releases are not always valuable because they are often thrown away, but they can be a valuable tool when a corps has very specific information it wants to communicate, and it wants to be certain the information is communicated correctly.
- Telegrams can be used as press advisories or requests for coverage of events. They should contain information on the nature of the event, the time, location, participants, etc.
- Pitch letters are used to request coverage, usually of a feature rather than a hard news event, and should be followed up with a telephone call.
- Photos accompanied by captions, can be used to attract the attention of editors and reporters. The photos should be black and white and of good quality.
- Press conferences are useful in emergencies. They should not be called unless a corps has something extremely important to say.

Making Contact

Regardless of the medium a corps uses, it should make contact with editors who are responsible for assigning stories and with specific reporters whenever possible.

It is also important to time the contacts carefully. Unless a story has a very specific time element, radio stations should be contacted two to three weeks in advance, and television stations about a month in advance. Daily papers need less notice, but corps organizers should know the production schedules for weekly newspapers.

"Don't ask for coverage unless you have a really good story. But when you do, be persistent."

Corps are likely to be more successful in "selling" a story to the media if the story concentrates on people. Other possibilities include stories on testimonials, events, tours of projects, or "cases in which problem situations have been turned around."

Counteracting Negative Press

Corps should not be reluctant to contact the media when a story has been published or aired that is in error. "If a story is wrong, ask for a meeting, or rebuttal time. Write to the editor and offer to give an interview."

In the event a corps has to cope with a negative situation, "be up front, be available, be compassionate, don't panic." She cautioned against giving telephone interviews in such situations and encouraged corps leaders to meet reporters face-to-face.

"If you are contacted by telephone and are unprepared to answer questions, find out when their deadline is and then offer to call them back. Then get as much information as possible and return the call." If possible, in such cases, corps leaders should find out as much as they can about what their story is going to say and how it is being written.

She pointed to the handling of the Johnson & Johnson Tylenol poisonings as examples of successful handling of the media during emergency situations.

Resources

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III. YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION

The workshop, from July 18 to 20 in Los Angeles, was attended by 19 representatives from 17 youth corps.

Agenda topics included:

- Experiential learning
- Competency-based learning
- Environmental awareness
- Literacy development at the work site
- Work sponsors as teachers on the job
- Education outside the work day
- Working with existing educational institutions
- Pre-employment training

Resource persons were:

- Louise Chiatovich, corpsmember development coordinator, California Conservation Corps
- Susan Curnan, Center for Human Resources, Brandeis University
- Dick Hitt, New Jersey Department of Adult Education
- Jerry Kolker, Public/Private Ventures
- Lee Leeson, director, California Writing Project, University of Southern California
- Tony Richards, associate professor of experiential learning, Dalhousie University; board member, Katimavik
- Karen Thaxton, special projects coordinator, Regional Employment and Training Consortium, San Diego
- Marla Young, division manager, Circuit Rider Productions
- Lucy Watkins, Roosevelt Centennial Youth Project

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

A Presentation By
Tony Richards
Associate Professor, Dalhousie University, Nova Scotia

Definition

In experiential learning, the student takes an active role in the learning process and is, therefore, able to see both the relevance of what is being learned and its connection with other aspects of his/her life.

"The learning has meaning. It has connectiveness. In experiential learning, there is a tenacity of pursuit, an attention to detail and quality. This applies to corps because all of the work they do in the field requires attention to detail and quality and finishing the job," Richards said.

Roots of the Concept

The roots of the concept lie, in part, in the Outward Bound program developed in the 1940s in the United Kingdom by Kurt Hahn, who was expelled in the 1930s from Hitler's Germany and later settled in Scotland. The Outward Bound program spread to the United States in 1960.

In forming the Outward Bound program, Hahn first identified five "declines" in youth. They are: a decline in skill and quality of work, a decline in self-discipline, a decline in initiative and enterprise, a decline in imagination or creativity, and a decline in compassion.

He then devised a program that attempted to correct those deficiencies. In the program, the students spend a prescribed amount of time in the wilderness overcoming various obstacles to their survival.

While the program exemplifies experiential learning, and lots of personal growth takes place, it has one drawback, Richards said: It fails to provide the opportunity for interaction with the community or the opportunity to do community service.

Youth Conservation Corps can draw from the experiential learning philosophy set forth by Hahn, but go one step further, to promote personal growth in the context of the community.

"Otherwise," he said, "personal growth becomes very narcissistic ... It doesn't help when the person goes back into the mainstream of the workforce or the school or the community."

"We should not be teaching skills in isolation. For participants to get the best feedback and the most powerful experience, they must engage in a service that has a human-to-human interaction."

Service learning, such as that which takes place in a youth corps, provides an opportunity to expose corpsmembers to altruism and issues of global concern. It also aids in self-development and personal growth and helps consolidate learning in other subjects.

Steps in Experiential Learning

Richards identified four steps in the experiential learning process:

1. Separation. In this stage the participant separates from his home, community or family and joins the corps. The move requires a commitment by the participant. "They have to be prepared to leave some of the old traditions and maybe some old values behind and start some new ones."

2. Encounter. This step involves participating in the program. "This is living the new life ... there is problem-solving, mastery of new skills ..."

3. Reflection or analysis. "What (corpsmembers) need to do is to be able to look at the experience and try putting it into some kind of context ... And that may mean that during the process or experience you have to give people time to reflect. Some people need a personal space at the end of the day or the week just to be on their own.

   "Most learning doesn't happen until you actually have an opportunity to reflect, and it's not complete until you return and put that into some sort of context in your own life."

4. Reincorporation. The last stage is what makes learning experiential. "You go through the experience and then you apply it when you leave the corps or when you go back to the community or school."

Developing an Ethic

A goal of experiential learning is the development of ethics. The attainment of that goal also involves several phases:

1. Information. Participants are given information or facts.

2. Knowledge. They can be said to have knowledge in a particular area when they have retained the pertinent facts.

3. Attitude. Participants develop an attitude toward the information they have received and the knowledge they have gained.

4. Value. The attitude, if held for a length of time, can become a value.

5. Ethic. If the participant acts on the value, it becomes an ethic.

   "It takes time to develop an ethic and it certainly takes time to change an ethic. What I'm interested in experiential learning, particularly in service learning, is trying to teach a skill that gives experience that has a connection somewhere else that people can see. Hopefully, that's where an ethic starts."

Measuring the Learning

Before beginning to measure the experiential learning that is taking place, a corps must determine its educational goals. Some of those goals might include teaching life skills (such as decision-making, problem-solving and communication), academic skills and job skills.

The achievements may be measured by having corpsmembers evaluate their own accomplishments, having crew leaders and corps organizers participate in the evaluations or use the evaluative skills of other agencies or educational institutions. More specifically, corps might have participants write learning contracts that entail having corpsmembers evaluate their current ability in a particular skill and set a long-range goal. They then devise a way to demonstrate that they have achieved that goal. Similarly, corpsmembers might establish personal development plans, in which they set goals for personal development, academics or job skills and then evaluate their achievements on a weekly or monthly basis with a group leader.

The measurement of skills may require the involvement of the corporate sector. "They say, this is what we need for a young person to work in our company and then they pass that information to you and you build that into your curriculum."

Conclusion

Corps should constantly be re-evaluating their educational techniques and goals. "We are always on the edge of a new generation. These new people represent a new generation, and in the next five years another one is coming in. Because of the rate of change, we can't always look at the standard way of evaluating and measuring. We need some continuity and stability, but we also need to be on the edge of, or be prepared to be on the edge of, change."

COMPETENCY-BASED PROGRAMMING

A Presentation By
Susan Curnan, Brandeis University
and
Dick Hitt, New Jersey Conservation Corps

Definition

Competency-based programming establishes very specific educational goals, designs programs or projects that will help fulfill those goals and establishes a way to measure whether -- and how well -- those goals have been met.

In competency-based programming in the youth employment and training field, skills are developed and measured in three categories:

1. Pre-employment and work maturity skills. In this category, crew members demonstrate a knowledge of the world of work -- including how to interview for a job, write a resume, become aware of one's preferences and interests and develop an ability to meet such responsibilities as regular attendance, following instructions, arriving on time, etc.

2. Basic skills. In this category, crew members demonstrate competency in such basic educational skills as reading, computation and writing.

3. Job specific skills. In this category, crew members master the basic and advanced skills required for specific jobs.

The Purpose

Increasingly, competency-based programming is being encouraged by federal agencies that fund youth training programs. The advantages are that the system:

1. Readily identifies and addresses individual needs.

2. Fosters achievement by providing specific, attain able objectives that are clear both to the crew members and the staff.

3. Increases motivation because youth respond positively to situations in which learning is determined by demonstrating a skill, rather than spending a prescribed amount of time in a classroom.

4. Provides for a realistic understanding of one's own

skills, abilities and preferences because it focuses on the work a crew member does.

5. Offers objective standards of achievement, giving corpsmembers credibility among employers and the community.

6. Offers youth a more realistic view of employment.

The Smokey House Project

Competency-based programming has been used successfully, Curnan said, in the Smokey House Project in Danby, Vermont. That project was started in 1974 and has served as a worksite for in-school disadvantaged youth ranging in age from 14 to 18. While the Smokey House project is different from many corps, its experience has a lot to offer programs that want to integrate education and work using a competency-based approach.

The program provides ongoing work in the fields of agriculture, forestry and carpentry. The program has included such projects as cultivating blueberries, helping in timberland improvements, designing and building simple solar equipment and building log houses and stone buildings.

The Smokey House staff works closely with school administrators, counselors and teachers in developing individual training plans for each youth based on his learning ability, personal interests, skills and competencies.

In addition to receiving direct "hands on" experience, the youth develop and apply computing and reasoning skills in the solution of practical problems, and they exercise their writing skills by recording procedures and results for permanent Smokey House records. The program helps young people acquire basic skills and sound work habits and attitudes; it also increases their awareness of the range of possible jobs and careers and the training those endeavors require.

Students at Smokey House help establish their own goals through a direct partnership called a "Work Plan Agreement." Progress is monitored on a regular basis, and the completed Work Plan Agreement provides a basis for evaluating achievements. The agreements also provide schools with a basis for awarding academic credit and give employers an assessment of the youths' employ ability.

For example, in assessing goals, the Work Plan Agreement asks the youth what specific techniques and skills he or she will need to complete a particular job. It then asks the youth to determine how he or she will know whether the job has been properly done. The agreement further asks what academic skills -- such as reading, science, writing and math -- will be required in the project. It also asks students to describe the tools, special equipment or materials needed to do a job, the safety precautions to be taken. Another part of the agreement requires youth to evaluate how well his or her goals are met.

Still other evaluations are completed by crew leaders and measure a wide range of abilities, from telling time, to measuring, to making change, to doing computation. Similar assessments exist for writing skills and work maturity skills.

The New Jersey Model

New Jersey's conservation corps are also using competency-based programming, Hitt said. In a variation of the Vermont system, the New Jersey corps uses an "Employability Skill Certificate" that eventually will be state-endorsed. The certificate indicates that a corpsmember has participated in the program and lists the skills the corpsmember has attained. The certificate will become valuable "because employers are increasingly unimpressed by high school diplomas. We wanted to make a strong case for dealing with people not by virtue of the piece of paper they have, but the skills they have."

In both the Vermont and New Jersey models, competencies have been developed in conjunction with employers and educational institutions. Hitt said the competency-based program has been of value not only to employers directly, but to labor unions, which have been encouraged to accept corpsmembers as apprentices because of the skills they have obtained.

WORKPLACE LITERACY

A Presentation By
Lee Leeson and Frank Gaik,
University of Southern California

The University of Southern California was asked by the California Conservation Corps to help develop a literacy program that would enable the CCC to better incorporate reading and writing -- particularly writing -- into the day-to-day life of corpsmembers.

"USC agreed to establish the program for several reasons," Leeson said. "First, USC realized that the standard classroom setting had failed to be effective for many young people, and some of those young people -- the corpsmembers -- were part of the community in which USC was located. The request from the CCC offered the university an opportunity to help improve adult literacy."

The corps offered a positive environment in which to improve literacy -- its members were highly motivated and had begun to develop pride and self-esteem, three necessary ingredients if learning is to take place. Furthermore, the CCC supervisors provided positive role models for the corpsmembers and the CCC environment would give corpsmembers an opportunity to immediately apply the writing and reading skills they would learn.

Program Principles

The program was based on several principles. The first was a definition of literacy "as more than just a set of skills. Literacy means being able to use reading and writing to get and use information, to create new knowledge for oneself, and to participate more fully in the workplace, the community and one's own culture."

The second principle was that "literacy is acquired in situations where the emphasis is on comprehending, communicating, or creating meaning, not through drills, workbooks and extensive correction of errors. We have a sense that learning to read and write is fairly natural for people who are in situations in which they have a lot of opportunities to practice reading, where they see other people reading and writing frequently, where there are materials around to read and subjects to write about, where there is a high expectation that they will learn to read and write successfully and where error is regarded as the natural."

The third principle, Leeson said, was that "writing and reading develop together." Many times in literacy programs, reading is the first thing that is emphasized. But because writing is very personal and the writer can control the subject matter and the vocabulary, it is sometimes easier for people to get started with writing. If the writing is done in a community that shares the same interests, that writing can become good reading for someone else."

The fourth principle is that "writing is a process that takes place over time and may involve pre-writing, writing, rewriting and editing. Many inexperienced writers think that good writers go magically from blank pieces of paper to a finished piece of writing. But good writers know that's not true."

A final principle, Leeson said, is that it is not necessary for a person to be an English teacher to help someone learn to read and write. In fact, there are three things that staff members can do to help corpsmembers become better writers:

- o First, they can let corpsmembers see them struggle with their own writing. "Let them see you sweat; let them see you struggle with writing a memo or a report."
- o Second, staff members can be "facilitators." They can encourage corpsmembers to write and give them opportunities to read and write.
- o Third, staff members can direct corpsmembers to someone within the organization who has good editing skills.

Literacy Activities

One phase of the literacy program was to encourage corpsmembers to fit writing into their everyday lives as corpsmembers. Some of the activities included:

- o Journal writing. Although the CCC had already begun to encourage corpsmembers to use journals, the USC program attempted to expand the possible uses of those journals. One method was to use brainstorming sessions, in which corpsmembers and supervisors gathered together and exchanged ideas on subjects that could be written about in the journals.

  The sessions had two rules: first, no ideas were to be rejected or criticized by other members of the group; and second, each member was required to participate.

- o Planning. Corpsmembers can be involved in writing for the purpose of project planning. For example, the CCC undertook a tree-planting project, "and we asked the corpsmembers to take five minutes and list in their notebooks the steps that were important in tree planting. Instead of you doing all the planning, you want them to take a hand in the planning -- not just by discussing it, but by writing about it."

- Getting information. Corpsmembers can be encouraged to take notes when they are being given instructions. "It can be very simple. If they're learning to use new tools, ask them to write down the names of those tools."

- Documenting. Corpsmembers can be involved in documenting information for use by others. "For example, older corpsmembers could help write a handbook of information needed by newcomers to the corps."

- Newsletters. "Having corpsmembers' writing published is the most powerful incentive I know of." The news letter can include lists of corpsmembers birthdays or comments by corpsmembers on a variety of topics. "The important idea here is that everyone can get published, and everyone can participate," Lesson said.

- Project log. Frank Gaik described the implementation of project logs, developed by USC and CCC staff. Corpsmembers were asked to record various aspects of the projects they had completed. The log requires a substantial amount of writing and cannot be completed either by checking off answers or by a simple "yes" or "no" response. Some examples of the ques tions asked are: the purpose of the project, the skills used and learned, safety precautions taken, environmental and social impact of the project, the kind of public contact required, assessments of the crew's productivity and an assessment of the value of the project.

The second part of the USC program involved encouraging corpsmembers to read by making interesting materials available. "There are lots of sources of free magazines and free books," Leeson said. They include churches, community drives and publishers. "If possible, it's good to have corpsmembers help you select the reading materials. We are able to do that in Los Angeles; we take them to the publishers, to the warehouses, to choose the books and magazines. Newspapers are great sources of reading materials. People are desperate for something to read in the morning."

"The reading material should be where the people are," Leeson said. They should be kept in lounges, cafeterias, restrooms, vans or dorms. "They should not be kept in libraries -- in our experience, nobody goes to the library at the corps centers."

WORK SUPERVISORS AS TEACHERS ON THE JOB SITE

A Presentation By
Marla Young, Circuit Rider Productions, Sonoma County, CA
and Susan Curnan, Brandeis University

Key ingredients in the successful integration of education on the worksite are the selection of on-site supervisors and the careful mixing of the crew members, Young said.

During the summer conservation corps operated by Circuit Rider Productions, two crew leaders were assigned to each crew of 16 members. One crew leader was responsible for planning the pro ject work, while the other was responsible for planning the educational program. Both were responsible for supervising the day-to-day work and educational program for their crew. "Their jobs are the same on the worksite," Young said. "The breaking up of duties facilitates communications during staff meetings and in planning."

Crew selection is done by the supervisors, and the crews are put together based on several criteria, including maturity levels, basic skills levels, the locality in which crew members live, whether they are male or female, and their special interests.

"Individuals are mixed in a crew based on these criteria, so you don't have eight kids on a crew who can't read or write. The premise is that kids learn from each other, so you're looking to mix levels of maturity and skills as opposed to putting life levels together."

Crews work four days. On the fifth day, the supervisors meet to plan the integration of education and the project work. For example, if a project involves trail-building, the education coordinator may decide to teach measuring skills or vocabulary relating to trail-building. Additionally, the education coordinator may plan ways to help particular crew members improve particular basic skills. The educational and project goals must be integrated from the beginning.

In a discussion following the presentation, Curnan had workshop participants list the qualities that program leaders should seek in hiring on-site supervisors. "The selection of the crew leader is the single most important predictor of success or failure of a project," one participant said. If you expect crew leaders or supervisors to integrate education and work, you need people who have the confidence and ability to do both. Ask yourself: what can I train staff to do? What experience and abilities must they have?

Among the most sought-after qualities were: the abilities to teach, to train and to counsel youth; the ability to motivate, to evaluate, to build a team, to keep records, to do technical work, to communicate. As one participant put it, "You've got to be some kind of tireless nut -- a super person -- who's going to go for it every day."

EXPECTATIONS OF CORPS PARTICIPANTS

(A Discussion)

During the workshop, participants agreed that corps should expect their members to participate in educational or enrichment activities outside the work day. However, the specific expectations varied widely.

Some corps set aside one day a week or an evening after work for corpsmembers to participate in General Equivalency Diploma (GED) or English as a Second Language programs. These programs were almost always conducted in conjunction with a local junior college or other educational institution. Other examples of ways corps have arranged educational programs include providing daily lessons by sub-contracting or hiring teachers.

Most are mandatory and attendance is taken by teachers and reported to corps supervisors. In some cases, corpsmembers are paid to participate and docked a day's pay for every day they fail to attend.

Corps also offer a wide variety of educational opportunities at their own centers. Some examples include: conservation train ing, first aid, tool training courses, money-management courses, career development workshops and writing workshops. Some corps organize projects in which corpsmembers receive specialized training in fields such as carpentry, energy conservation, landscaping and tree surgery.

Several participants suggested that education programs were most successful -- whether they were done by the corps itself or in conjunction with other learning institutions -- if they were of short duration, preferably four to six weeks.

"We found that if you structured something that lasted five months, corpsmember were often gone by the time the course was over," one participant said.

REMEDIAL EDUCATION
A Presentation By

Karen Thaxton
San Diego Regional Employment and Training Consortium

Basic deficiencies in reading, writing, speaking, listening and computation present major barriers to successful job getting and retention. Lack of basic skills also limits an individual's ability to advance to more job specific, occupational training. Employers are practically unanimous when they relate fundamental reading and writing to entry-level employment.

Remediation in basic skills is necessary for young people with such deficiencies if they are to better their chances for long-range employment. Remediation is meant for those students who have already been exposed to certain skills but have yet to master them. Thaxton said, "reading and math skills are the ones we seem to have to work with most if participants are going to be able to go out and get a job."

A successful remediation program will have the following elements:

- It will include a sound assessment to determine student needs. In order to be effective, the educational strengths and weaknesses of the individual must be discovered in order to devise an appropriate, individualized educational plan. Strengths should be recognized and built upon. Weaknesses should be remedied. But both strengths and weaknesses must be clearly articulated at the beginning of a remedial program. Since the results of the program will be measurable, testing will be necessary both before the learning begins and after it ends.

- It will be learner-centered. "Students must at all times know where they stand and what they have accomplished. That helps the student feel good about his own learning and it helps eliminate competition." The instruction should be individualized and self-paced. Each students' needs will be different; an educational plan must therefore be crafted for each individual. The remedial program should be designed to allow the student to become increasingly self-motivated by facilitating a series of successes.

- It will be relevant. That is, the skills that a student is attempting to master will be relevant to the work that he or she is going to do.

- "For example, if a corpsmember is learning math, is she learning to manipulate numbers, or is she learning to work with a measuring system...Somebody must be able to go out and use a tape measure or ruler and then be assessed on how well it's done. It helps to think of the skills that corpsmembers are learning as 'enabling skills' -- skills that will help him or her enter the work force and achieve certain goals on the job."

- Its goals will be well-defined. In a successful program, the goals must be specific, clearly defined and stated in advance, both to the corps leaders and to the participants. "They must say more, for example, than that a student is going to learn to read. They should say that the student will be able to read newspaper help-wanted ads, or follow directions on a can of insecticide or read repair manuals."

- Teachers should have a variety of teaching experience, strategies and materials to aid in the individualization of instruction. Unrelieved classroom instruction is not effective.

Other successful programs also cite these key elements:

- active parent or guardian participation,

- positive teacher attitudes about student's potential, and

- immediate feedback to students.

WORKING WITH EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

(Presentation and Discussion)

In this segment of the workshop, a representative of the California Conservation Corps, Louise Chiatovich, and a representative of the City Volunteer Corps of New York, Barbara Connors, explained how their organizations had established relationships with educational institutions. During the discussion, Dick Hitt, of the New Jersey Department of Education, talked about the advantages of such arrangements to the institutions themselves.

The California Program

The California Conservation Corps first established a relation ship with the Office of the Chancellor of the California Community College System. The first step was an agreement in which the corps and the chancellor's office said they would work together to provide "whatever education they could for corpsmembers," Chiatovich said.

The CCC then met individually with the presidents of each community college located near a CCC center. "We approached each college individually and the meetings were arranged by the chancellor's office. It was better, we found, if someone within their organization made that arrangement. The basic idea is to start from inside the system at the highest level you can. That gives you some power and leverage."

During the meetings, aside from discussing the general agreement, "we asked the college to assess our corpsmembers and to provide a program that would meet their educational needs." Some of those special needs included shortening the length of courses and, because of transportation problems, arranging for some of them to be held at the corps' centers, rather than on the college campuses.

The CCC also hired a consultant to work closely with the chancellor's office and the colleges to develop the details of the pro gram. "The people designated to set up the programs -- both at the college level and at the corps level -- should be people who can both see the larger perspective and do the logistical work. It is also necessary to maintain frequent contact and communication with the educational institutions.

The New York Program

The City Volunteer Corps established a similar arrangement with City University of New York (CUNY). Because of the arrangement, Connors said, the corps was able to "jump" waiting lists for the colleges' literacy programs and have corpsmembers given priority for the courses.

In addition to testing, placement, monitoring attendance and corpsmembers' progress in the various courses, the City University of New York also offered counseling programs on four campuses, career development workshops and college admission workshops for those corpsmembers who had already received their Graduate Equivalency Diplomas.

Like the CCC, the City Volunteer Corps struck an agreement with the Chancellor of CUNY, but the corps also paid to have a staff member added to the university staff whose sole responsibility was to coordinate CVC's educational program.

Because CUNY was unable to offer college level courses to corps members because of funding problems, the CVC also made contact with private colleges in the area. "We got some interest from the New School of Social Research, which offered college level courses for some of our members.

"I think there are probably colleges in any community that can see the benefit to them of being involved in a community service project," Connors said.

Advantages to Institutions

Educational institutions can be persuaded to participate in the training of corpsmembers if they are made to see the training as an opportunity to provide alternative education to segments of the society that would otherwise be left out of the educational system, Hitt said. One way to enlist their support is to meet with them, explain the purposes of the program and invite them to meet with corpsmembers and visit work sites.

While Hitt agreed that initial contact should be made at the top of the educational institution's organizational ladder, he also suggested enlisting the support of teachers or department heads as well. Colleges can also be made to see that the training programs they establish for corpsmembers can be used to recruit students for longer-term college programs.

He pointed out that timing is important in making contact with educational institutions because their budgets and curricula need to be established far in advance of the start of the actual programs. And, since "budgets change, programs change and climates change, it's important to keep in touch with those changes."

He also suggested that corps leaders understand the structure of the institution whose aid it is attempting to enlist. "Know who is responsible for what -- what the chain of command is -- before you go knocking on doors."

Other Options

In a discussion that followed the presentations, other corps leaders suggested that arrangements could also be made with alternative high schools that might be willing to set up vocational or remedial courses.

Educational institutions were also persuaded to set up special courses that parallel the work that corpsmembers are doing, such as courses in forestry, biology or other sciences. In one case, some of the courses were taught by graduate students from a local college, allowing them to obtain teaching credit while also bene fitting the corps.

One participant suggested that classroom work should be structured with great care. "There is a conflict," the participant said. "During the day we're doing work that's valid and interesting to corpsmembers. Then, all of a sudden, we're shifting them to a classroom because we believe it's necessary in order for them to get jobs. But I think we should remember, in setting up these programs, that that's where the system failed for many of them."

LIFE AFTER THE CORPS

A Presentation By
Louise Chiatovich, California Conservation Corps

"Our approach was not to place corpsmembers in jobs when they were finished, but to help them develop their skills, identify interests and values and show them how those elements relate to jobs."

The training program is concentrated in six career-development classes that are one-and-one-half to two hours in length. The goals are to enable corpsmembers to:

1. Fill out job applications.
2. State or list their skills, interests and experience as they relate to work.
3. Develop occupational interests and preferences based on their knowledge of themselves.
4. Develop resources and strategies for gaining employment.

The program is based on commonly-accepted career counseling methods in which "you have the person look at themselves, see what they have to offer, learn who they are, match themselves with a job that suits them and then equip them with the skills to find the job. Too often job search classes concentrate on just the last piece -- interviewing skills and resume writing."

The classes fall into four categories:

1. Establishing values. The focus is on helping corpsmembers define what is important to them, who they are -- what their values are in relation to employment.

   "Often we don't know what our values are, even though we are continually acting on them. "In exercises offered in this part of the training program, corpsmembers are able to identify their values in a concrete way."

2. Skills and interests. Through a series of tests and other exercises, corpsmembers determine where their interests lie and what their skills are.

3. Career information. Here the focus is on giving corpsmembers information on the kinds of skills needed for specific jobs.

4. Job seeking skills. Focuses on teaching corps members how to fill out applications, how to inter view, how to make contact with prospective employers, etc.

In a discussion following the presentation, corps leaders offered other suggestions for helping corpsmembers make the transition from the corps to jobs in the private sector. Those suggestions included:

- Writing letters to sponsors when a project is completed, including the names of the corpsmembers who participated. The letters can be used as references by corpsmembers.
- Organizing job clubs in which corpsmembers involved in job search activities work together in a structured manner.
- Involving corpsmembers in internships, apprenticeships or in temporary employment.
- Sending out job announcements to corps centers. The information on job opportunities can come from governmental agencies or private sector firms that have openings.
- Encouraging the inclusion of corps experience (i.e., landscaping, laboring, maintenance) in the entrance qualifications for government jobs.
- Encouraging corpsmembers to do volunteer work or spend unpaid time working in local businesses, such as a radio station or auto body shop.

Beyond career development, some corps concentrate their efforts on helping corpsmembers develop life skills, such as learning how to open a bank account, balance a check book and apply for financial aid for college.

IV. JOB DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION

This mini-workshop, held on August 5 and 6 in Sacramento, was designed specifically for representatives of youth conservation corps in Michigan, California and the state of Washington, programs that are actively involved in job placement. The sessions were attended by six participants from five programs.

The legislation establishing the Michigan Civilian Conservation Corps and the Washington State Service Corps requires job placement activity; the California Conservation Corps has been working on job development at the state level, and the East Bay and San Francisco conservation corps have been increasingly active in this area.

Agenda topics included:

- o Job development with small businesses
- o Pre-employment training

The resource persons were Michael Sack, program officer, Public/Private Ventures; and Louise Chiatovich, corpsmember development coordinator, California Conservation Corps.

JOB DEVELOPMENT

A Presentation By
Michael Sack, Public Private Ventures

Developing jobs for youth requires a business-like and systematic approach that includes analyzing the local labor market, targeting specific employers, making contact with them in a way that is effective, following up on those contacts and keeping accurate records on all aspects of the job development process.

Part of the system described by Michael Sack was based on the method developed by Jobs For Youth Inc., a private, non-profit organization based in New York, Boston and Chicago and dedicated to finding productive employment for at-risk youth.

Analyzing the Market

In analyzing the local labor market, Sack said, youth corps job developers can determine employment trends, identify high-growth occupations and identify specific likely employers, particularly small businesses with high turnover, entry-level and semi-skilled job openings.

In a brain-storming session during the workshop, participants, suggested likely sources for such information. They included:

- Small business association rosters
- Bank reports on small businesses
- Local Chambers of Commerce
- Better Business Bureaus
- Classified sections of newspapers
- Trade journals
- Radio and television ads
- Business directories
- State employment services

Targeting Employers

The second step Sack said, is to identify a specific base of employers whose business profiles appropriately match the needs of the programs' client population. During this phase, it is important to learn as much as possible about the characteristics of the employer, i.e., whether he or she is willing to hire teenagers, whether there are part-time openings, whether entry-level jobs are available, what the hiring procedures are, what the peak hiring periods are, and the name of the person in charge of hiring.

During this phase, it is also important for corps job developers to be armed with information about corpsmembers who might be matched with the prospective employer.

Making Contact

Sometimes, it will be necessary for corps leaders to personally visit prospective employers, but telephone contact can be equally effective, Sack said. He offered several suggestions for making effective telephone contact:

- Know who is in charge of hiring and ask for him/her. While corporate presidents may sound good from a status standpoint, they have little or nothing to do with personnel. In large companies, the person with the authority for hiring is usually in the personnel office or employment office. In small businesses, it is often the boss who does the hiring.

- Be professional. When making the initial call, it is important to identify yourself, name the agency or program you represent, ask for the name of the person who handles hiring (if you don't already know) and speak to that person. Make the call at a time when the contact is most likely to be available.

- Arouse interest. It is important to gain the employer's interest immediately. This can be done by emphasizing the employer's need for the client or service being offered.

- Develop interest. The job developer's actions during this step are based on the employer's reaction to the initial introduction. If an employer seems receptive to the opening statements, a job developer can continue based on either the qualities of a specific client or clients, or on the benefits to the employer of dealing with the corps.

  In either case, the points that are made should be geared toward the specific interests of the employer. Part of the process requires that the job developer be a good listener, and that he or she ask questions that will further help identify the employer's needs.

- Counter objections. A job developer will always encounter objections, but can minimize their effect by being prepared. If the job developer is trying to "sell" a client, knowledge of the client's background gives the job developer the ability to anticipate an employer's objections. In turn, the job developer can devise a positive "counter-statement" before making the telephone call.

In situations where the employer expresses an objection, it is important to acknowledge the employer's points and, if possible, counter them with a positive point.

Closing

This final step in the telephone conversation is reached when the employer has expressed an interest in the service or the client and objections have been met. It is also at this point that the job developer has an indication of what the employer will offer.

During the closing phase, the job developer should set up an interview, schedule a visit, agree to send brochures or to call again on a specific date. The goal is to set up interviews for clients, not necessarily to obtain employment for them.

Follow-Up and Record-Keeping

Sack noted the importance of following up on the arrangement that is agreed to, whether the arrangement is to send more information by mail, send a client for an interview or meet for a personal visit.

In this phase and in others, good record-keeping will make the job placement efforts more productive.

Sources

The Jobs For Youth Technical Assistance program in Boston offers assistance in the developing job-placement programs. It is located at 312 Stuart Street, Boston, MA, 02116.

Other sources of information are:

ABT Associates. Job Development Training. Cambridge, MA.

Minnesota Department of Manpower Services. Job Department Reference Manual. Minneapolis, MN 1971.

Sanchez, Gilbert. Job Development and Placement: CETA Program Models. Washington, D.C. 1978.

U.S. Employment Service: "Employer Relations Handbook" Washington, D.C. 1975.

PRE-EMPLOYMENT PLANNING

A Presentation By
Louise Chiatovich, California Conservation Corps

In her presentation, Louise Chiatovich described a systematic process for developing and implementing a pre-employment program.

Clarifying Goals

The first step in the process is to clarify overall program goals and identify specific pre-employment programs to meet those goals. For example, programs that provide work experience and education without placement goals would emphasize career development and vocational awareness. A program with specific placement goals would put more emphasis on job seeking skill and job referrals.

Developing Curriculum

The curriculum should represent the core topics to be taught in career development or pre-employment skill development classes. Such a curriculum should include:

- self assessment awareness: identifying skills, values and interests related to work and employment;
- career awareness: understanding the range of jobs and careers available, how jobs match work skills, education and personal interests, where job types are located;
- job seeking skills: how to fill out applications and resumes, how to research work areas and discover job openings, interviewing and interview follow up skills.

Many programs emphasize job seeking skills at the expense of self assessment and career awareness. Participants are directed to job openings without clear recognition of skill, knowledge and aptitude areas. A comprehensive curriculum should include all three topic areas, which then help to individualize services for program participants.

Documenting and Reporting Progress

In this step, a system to monitor the program should be designed. Information collected in this system might include the placement of participants in jobs after they leave the program or during the program, skills and experiences acquired during the program, number of classes completed in the program and competencies achieved. Documentation becomes the internal tracking system and also may be the structure for a participant follow up after the program ends.

Designing the Structure

In this phase, leadership determines what resources -- space, personnel, funding -- will be required to implement the program. The structure should supplement the work or training program by allocating time when participants can concentrate (early morning or after rest from work). Classes should be frequent enough to maintain continuity and short enough (no longer than 1-2 hours each) to maintain concentration. Preplanning the curriculum schedule and recording participant progress helps to simplify implementing the entire program.

Management Presentation

During this phase, the curriculum and tracking system are presented to management with all costs, time and staff requirements. At this point, a determination is made of who will conduct classes, what participants will attend, and whether the program will be piloted first to monitor results. Alternatives to the pre-employment program may be presented at this time, such as keeping the program as is, or providing exit counseling alone to participants.

Piloting Program

A pilot program will help management identify problems or deficiencies in the planning or structure of the program. The pilot may involve evaluation of a short term program or a longer-term program for a small segment of the population.

Refining

In this phase, the results of the pilot program are reviewed and assessed and necessary modifications are made.

Implementing the Program

The final implementation of the program can now begin. The policy has been stated, the curriculum designed, reporting and tracking methods developed and resources assembled.

Monitoring and Evaluating

Once the program has been implemented, regular monitoring and evaluation should continue so that the program can be refined as needed. Individual program cycles can be compared to see if benefits to participants have resulted. A pre- and post written test or oral interview can be provided as an assessment of gains in awareness of information regarding career planning and job-seeking skills.

Conclusion

After Chiatovich's presentation, the audience in the workshop discussed obstacles they had encountered in designing pre-employment programs. Many problems arose from inadequate clarification or understanding of overall program goals before pre-employment program components were implemented. Other problems related to developing a placement component without giving adequate attention to the curriculum.

Another source of information is:

California Conservation Corps
Career Development Notebook
Training Manual, Corpsmember Manual, 1984.
c/o CCC, 1530 Capitol Avenue,
Sacramento, California 95814

V. STARTING A YOUTH CORPS

This workshop, co-sponsored with the Human Environment Center and the Roosevelt Centennial Youth Project. It was held on September 11 and 12, at the Wilder Forest Conference Center in St. Croix, Minnesota, and was attended by 33 participants from 12 cities and six states. The Minnesota Conservation Corps served as host.

Agenda topics included:

- Why a corps?
- Mission and goals
- Work/service projects
- Youth development
- Administrative structures and staffing
- Costs and value
- Planning and implementing a corps
- Advice from corps veterans

Resource persons were:

- David Boyd, California Conservation Corps
- John Grix, Minnesota Conservation Corps
- Cisco Hunter, California Conservation Corps
- Jim Klasen, Youth Resource Development Corporation of Dutchess County (NY)
- Jerry Kolker, Public/Private Ventures
- Joanna Lennon, East Bay Conservation Corps
- John Oubre, San Francisco Conservation Corps
- Nancy Peterson, San Francisco Conservation Corps and East Bay Conservation Corps
- Peg Rosenberry, Human Environment Center
- Cindy Tierney, Michigan Conservation Corps
- Wendy Wolf, research director, Public/Private Ventures

WHY A CORPS? -- AN OVERVIEW

A Presentation By
Jerry Kolker, Public/Private Ventures

Background

In the 1930s, the predecessor of today's youth conservation and service corps -- the Civilian Conservation Corps -- was operated by a federal agency with federal support and funds. Today, that support has vanished, and is unlikely to be forthcoming from the current administration in Washington.

Nonetheless, the youth corps movement is growing rapidly throughout the country on the state and local levels where 10,000 youthare being served by corps that are spending more than $100 million a year.

While the absence of federal support means corps leaders must continually scramble for money from a variety of public and private sources, it also allows them to operate with freedom from federal regulation, based on state or local needs.

The newness of the most recent conservation corps movement -- most corps are less than two years old -- has advantages as well. "This is a movement unburdened by long-established traditions that are hostile to new ideas."

The Need

"Everybody in this room knows the economic recovery is not an economic recovery for disaffected youth. You don't have to go very far to find graffiti-ridden sections of major cities, to see kids hanging out who can't get work or who have simply tuned out.

"The condition of young people in this country today is probably in the most severe state that it has been in a number of years. The types of jobs many are getting are not going to take them very far, and the type of training that does exist provides for short-term, quick-fix solutions that aren't going to help a lot of disaffected kids."

A Solution

There are certain elements common to youth conservation corps that make them more effective than more traditional types of job-training programs.

1. They provide productive work. "What makes corps different is that tangible, visible outcomes are achieved by the young people in a corps . . . and by the communities they are serving.

2. They foster positive social values. "The problem of young people is not just in the area of skills, it's in attitudes toward work. Corps help develop a work ethic; they teach people from different social classes and different races to work together and develop a respect for each other's life styles. They foster team work."

3. They improve employability. Corps not only teach traditional job skills, but are beginning to tie education to the work that they do -- increasing a participant's employability. "It (the educational aspect) is exciting because for the first time you have the opportunity to work with kids (in enhancing basic skills) both within and outside the classroom setting."

   In short, corps provide comprehensive programs that deal with the "total kid."

The Challenges

Establishing such a program is not without its difficulties:

1. Corps leaders face conflicts in trying to meet the multiple goals of providing meaningful work, job training and education.

   For example, human service projects may teach social values but do less to increase a participant's employability. Also there is tension between time spent on education and time spent on work. "You always have to be looking at trade-offs."

2. Funding offers another challenge. "This is not the sort of program that will survive on a single source of funding, so you're going to have to scramble for federal, state and local dollars and for money from private foundations and corporations."

3. In the beginning, corps organizers will have to make important decisions about administrative structures. They will have to decide whether to be part of a state agency or local agency or whether to be a non profit organization. "If you're part of a government program you get stability and continuity, but you also get the attendant regulations. If you choose to be a non-profit, you're not controlled by civil service regulations, so your hiring can be more flexible, but you don't get as much stability and you don't get as much political support."

Summary

In closing, Kolker said: "As we do research at Public/Private Ventures, we don't come up with the simple answer that this is the only thing that works . . . but we are excited about the youth corps idea. If you look at kids throughout the country -- kids fighting forest fires in California or ladling out soup to the homeless in New York City -- for the first time you're seeing a kid being treated as a resource rather than as some kind of dangerous liability."

MISSION AND GOALS

(A Discussion)

In workshops held throughout the year, veteran corps leaders were asked to give advice to newcomers to the youth corps movement. Again and again those veterans stressed the importance of the mission statement in keeping the organization focused.

Following are suggestions on developing mission statements and some examples of mission statements developed by several organizations.

- Keep the mission statement simple.

  "For example," said Jim Klasen of the Youth Resource Development Corporation of Dutchess County, NY, "the YRDC is a single, special purpose organization. We're con- cerned only with matters of youth employment. We set it up purposely that way. We believed that it should be an organization that is only concerned with youth employability, youth employment and performing community service.

- Don't file the mission statement away in a corporate book somewhere.

  "Just as youth need consistency and orientation and re-orientation, the staff, board and community need to have the mission and the value of the program rehearsed regularly," Klasen said.

- Always refer to the mission statement when making program changes.

  "Make sure that the addition or changes fit because you're going to be judged on how well you performed according to your mission statement and goals, and if you get off track, it's hard to get back on," said Cindy Tierney of the Michigan Conservation Corps.

- Avoid the temptation to write a mission statement that is too broad.

  "Perhaps the temptation will always be to write a very broad mission statement that will appeal to a vast number of people. The danger is that certain goals conflict, so choices have to be made," said Jerry Kolker of Public/Private Ventures.

- A double mission can work.

  "Tension develops when there is a double mission, but that tension is an inherent part of the program and can work to the benefit of the program and be positive," said Joanna Lennon of the East Bay Conservation Corps.

The Michigan Conservation Corps

The Michigan Conservation Corps was created in 1984 when unemployment was high and welfare rolls were rising. The corps was one of the government's answers to the problems.

The mission statement is two-fold: to "conserve, improve and develop the state's natural resources and enhance, preserve and maintain public lands and waters through the employment of residents of the state in work training programs" and to "provide work experience for certain residents of the state that will increase their likelihood of obtaining future employment."

The California Conservation Corps

The California Conservation Corps was established and funded through state legislation in 1976. Its mission statement speaks to a dual goal: to "develop, conserve and protect California's natural resources" and to "provide meaningful work experience for California youth."

The City Volunteer Corps of New York

The City Volunteer Corps' mission statement says: "The purpose of the CVC is to provide services of real and lasting value to the City of New York in a manner that challenges young adults and promotes their personal development and enhances their educational opportunities."

The statement goes on to list five specific goals, which include promoting the personal development of volunteers; assisting volunteers in reaching their full potential; providing high quality human and physical services; recognizing the creativity, achievement and involvement of the staff, and stimulating, informing and encouraging other related youth service activities.

WORK/SERVICE

(Presentations and Discussion)

In opening remarks in this session, Martha Diepenbrock, the workshop leader and a member of the staff of Public/Private Ventures, noted that work is central to youth corps programs.

"Without productive work, these programs would not be," she said. "Without work that is of tremendous community benefit, (corps) couldn't meet some of the other goals, such as instilling in youth a strong work ethic, obtaining visibility and building a broad-based constituency."

With that premise as a guideline, brief presentations and discussions addressed such questions as: What kinds of work or projects should corps do? How should those projects be selected? Who should the sponsors be and how should they be chosen? How can a corps insure that productive work is done?

What Kinds of Work

First, projects should be of benefit to the community. "You want to identify something that is desperately needed by the community and will produce considerable community benefits, not a make-work project."

Second, the project should have value to the corpsmembers. "It should teach good work habits, teach something about a new occupation, teach the value of team work, and perhaps, the value of conservation."

Third, the project should be visible. "Especially in the beginning, the project should be something that will be seen by the community."

Fourth, the project should be safe for crew members. "It's (safety) a very critical issue and is something that should be considered during the planning stages, not after the project has begun."

Fifth, the project should be short-term, tangible and goal oriented. "Many people believe that if you have such projects, you can better insure that productive work is being done."

Existing and past youth corps have accomplished a tremendous variety of work in the following areas: conservation, community, improvements, human services, specialty fields, and emergency response.

What are the Benefits of Community Improvement Work?

Community improvement projects can include rehabilitation of public buildings, such as painting and small-scale carpentry work, John Oubre, of San Francisco Conservation Corps, said. Hanging sheetrock is an example of one project in which young people can learn a variety of skills.

"Creating and assembling playground structures can be really exciting," Oubre said. "We're engaged in about 15 such projects this year."

Another satisfying project can involve historical preservation: "That's where you have to be a little aggressive -- you have to go out and look for a building that you really think the community wants to restore. It's a real public-type project, but it takes a lot of work because you have to do a lot of negotiating," he said.

Why Human Service Projects?

The City Volunteer Corps of New York has shown that human service projects can be done successfully by youth corps, said Martha Diepenbrock.

The corps has been involved in food distribution projects, in manning senior citizen centers, in staffing homeless shelters at night, tutoring non-English speaking residents, setting up appointments for visiting nurses, escorting senior citizens on shopping trips, helping senior citizens move into new housing projects.

"The trick here is that a lot of these projects depend on the needs of the clients, so you have to be creative with downtime -- the projects can't be easily structured."

What Are the Benefits of Emergency Response?

Emergencies have played a very important role in the California Conservation Corps, said Dave Boyd, a CCC representative. "They lend themselves to the kinds of labor-intensive crew efforts that are available in youth corps programs, and they can be very valuable services to the community."

Emergencies can range from fire-fighting and flood control to cleaning up after such natural disasters as hurricanes, tornadoes and earthquakes. They can also include fighting insect infestation and cleaning up after oil spills, he said. Emergencies add to a corps' visibility and are important in keeping a corps' morale high.

It's important to know that responding to emergencies has a high cost, he cautioned. "It involves a lot more training, specialized equipment and, sometimes, overtime costs. It involves flexible projects and understanding sponsors, and a much more professional staff."

He also noted that the CCC initially "would not have been called out on emergencies. "We get ourselves involved . . . you have to figure out a way to get in there."

Why Specialty Crews?

"Most of the time the prime benefit of a work experience is learning the work ethic," said Dave Boyd of the CCC. "But there are times where more detailed skills are learned, and often that happens with specialty crews."

Specialty crews can be involved in landscaping, tree surgery and building rehabilitation, but energy projects can be some of the most beneficial specialty crew projects done by corps because "there are a lot of dollars attached to and available for energy work." Energy projects can include low-income home weatherization, installing water-heating systems in public buildings and conducting energy aduits.

"We've taken kids off the streets -- many without high school diplomas -- and taught them how to write energy audits, make recommendations on how to save energy and how to go back in and install what they recommended. They see a process from beginning to end, and they get a benefit that they didn't get from the traditional educational system," he said.

"One of the more rewarding things for me was taking a kid who never had any interest in mathematics and teaching him Pythagorean theorems so that he could figure out the slope of a roof."

In energy work, he said, the CCC got the work because the host agency lacked the technical expertise and "we had a staff that knew how to do the job."

Who Sponsors Projects

"Basically," said John Grix of the Minnesota Conservation Corps, "a work sponsor is any agency or organization that is in need of assistance." They may be public agencies on the federal, state or local level, or they may be private institutions.

For example, he said, federal agencies may include those that oversee public lands, such as the National Park Service, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers or the Bureau of Land Management.

On the state level, he said, departments of natural resources "are prime targets for conservation corps." There are also departments of human resources, historical societies and state operated zoos.

On the private, non-profit level are shelters for the homeless or for battered women, child-care centers, churches, homes for the elderly and hospitals.

"This is just a brief shopping list," he said. "There are many more in your community."

"The key," he said, "is to have diversity in work project sponsors. I think for the youth development aspect of the program, you need a variety of work experience; and to achieve that you need a variety of sponsors."

What Roles Do Sponsors Play?

"If the notion of productive work is a central theme for youth corps, the sponsors are the vehicle to allow that work to happen," said David Boyd of the California Conservation Corps. "Your relationship with the sponsor can fall along a broad spectrum of possibilities. How you choose to relate to your sponsor will play a very fundamental role in the eventual outcome, nature and perception of your program."

At one end of the spectrum is the sponsor who plays a passive role, Boyd said. In that role, the sponsor approves a project and allows the corps to work on the sponsor's facilities, but the corps buys all the materials, does all the project planning and provides the labor and technical know-how.

In an intermediate relationship, the youth corps provides the workers and the general crew supervision, and the sponsor provides the materials and the actual technical supervision. "So your supervisors could be generalists and not necessarily have technical responsibility for accomplishing the project."

At the other end of the spectrum is the very active sponsor. "At its most extreme, the sponsor would provide you or the corpsmembers with a paycheck, and the sponsor would take the responsibility for developing all the project work, providing everything, including the technical and crew supervision."

"What makes this issue very important," Boyd said, "is that the more active your sponsor is, the less control you have over the project." Control -- or lack of it -- will affect staffing, budgeting and the effectiveness of the youth development part of the program.

In more general terms, Boyd said, "when you're working with sponsors there is a wide range of things that you can ask for to get them involved in your program." Sponsors can be asked to provide technical supervision, materials, supplies, orientation and training for corpsmembers. They can discuss the importance of the project and help corpsmembers understand the importance of the work they are doing. They can help with public relations. "It's better to have someone else promote you than to have you promote yourself. A very supportive sponsor can do wonders in helping your program grow and survive. They add to your program visibility," Boyd said.

Sponsors can also provide in-kind services such as gas, vehicles, tools, or anything necessary to make the program operate. They can also provide job placement for corpsmembers who have worked for them, and they can provide a fee for service, adding to reimbursement of the corps costs.

How Can Sponsors Be Developed?

John Oubre of the San Francisco Conservation Corps, offered four suggestions for attracting sponsors.

First, he said, "Never begin a project without a personal visit. A phone call is not enough. Visit the sponsor, talk with him, try to create a cooperative spirit."

Second, "Be clear about expectations. There have been times when I simply pulled a crew from a project. Part of it was that the sponsor did not understand what the expectations were, so we had to go back and renegotiate."

A third suggestion "is one I call shock theory -- or creating a significant emotional experience for the sponsors. How do you do that? You tell the crew that you must perform quality work in far less time than the sponsor expects. I always get conservative in predicting how long the crew is going to take. We say it's going to take four weeks, and the crew walks in and every thing is finished in two weeks -- that's shock value. It nurtures and develops the sponsor to expect certain things of you."

Finally, Oubre said, "do a job well. It's one thing to do the job in far less time than is expected. It's another thing to produce quality. I can do a botched up job quickly. But if I do a job well in far less time than is expected, then the word spreads."

How Do You Insure Productive Work Is Done?

"There are a tremendous number of things that go into insuring that productive work gets done," said David Boyd of the CCC.

One is project planning. That involves visiting the work sites before projects begin, having a clear understanding of responsibilities, writing a work plan or contract with a sponsor, paying attention to details. "Planning, planning and more planning are probably the key things to insure that the work gets accomplished."

The second most important thing is fall-back planning, Boyd said. "After all your planning, things never go as expected. Some times, neither you nor your crew will believe how quickly you can accomplish projects, so you'll budget time for a project and finish it more quickly than you expected. If you haven't thought of something else to move to, you'll have downtime, and that's not good."

Other key ingredients to insure that productive work gets done are well-trained crews and staff, clear lines of communication with sponsors and regular project monitoring, he said.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

(Presentations and Discussions)

Youth corps programs provide a unique "window of opportunity" for helping young people become more productive members of society, said Jerry Kolker of Public/Private Ventures.

"In a cruder sense, you've got the kid right there, doing productive work, doing hard work; they're functioning and they're starting to feel good about themselves. So you've got this opportunity to approach some of the other areas that haven't necessarily been approached successfully in the past -- areas like education, life planning, parenting, building a sense of community involvement."

Beyond teaching youth skills that will lead to employment, youth corps programs can address issues relating to work habits, including punctuality and regular attendance; personal habits, whether they've arranged for child-care and transportation; and self-esteem, self-confidence, trust and respect.

But, said Kolker, while corps leaders would generally agree that these things need to be developed, there is some disagreement on how they should be developed, and at what cost to the central goals of work and service.

In this segment of the workshop, three veteran corps leaders described how their organizations cope with the question of youth educational development outside the work site. In two cases -- the California Conservation Corps and the Youth Resource Development Corporation -- education is provided by outside agencies. In the East Bay Conservation Corps, education is arranged in-house.

At one CCC center, an arrangement has been made with the Los Angeles Unified School District in which a teacher from the General Equivalency Diploma (GED) program conducts classes for corpsmembers for four hours each day. The CCC also has a journal writing program and a conservation awareness program, according to Cisco Hunter, CCC representative. Each youth corps center also contracts with community colleges in their areas to provide career development programs and remedial programs in reading, writing and math.

The Youth Resource Development Corporation, in Dutchess County, N.Y., has made an arrangement with the Board of Cooperative Education Services to provide a teacher for four mornings a week to teach basic skills.

But the East Bay Conservation Corps preferred to establish its own educational program, said Joanna Lennon. The corps' goal was to establish a highly-individualized program. It includes a required core curriculum with courses in first aid, tool handling, money management and career development.

After completing the core program, corpsmembers are assessed for their skills in reading, writing and math, regardless of whether they have high school diplomas. "A diploma is not necessarily a guarantee of literacy," Lennon said.

After the skills assessment, an individualized basic skill course is set up for each corpsmember. The classes are conducted on Fridays and two nights a week, meaning that corpsmembers spend between eight and 10 hours a each week on education, Lennon said.

A teacher also conducts a GED preparation course that includes the social sciences, humanities and physical sciences. Those classes are conducted two evenings a week. For those students who do not require basic skills or GED classes, the corps offers courses in leadership training; career training, including resume writing and handling interviews; and internship programs. If a corpsmember has completed high school work and is ready for college-level courses, he or she may enroll in a community college.

In closing this segment of the workshop, Kolker said that the "work part of the corps' program will come more easily because there are more guideposts and more history. The youth development part is harder to get a handle on, but is of equal, perhaps even more, importance."

ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURES
AND
STAFFING

(A Discussion)

Administrative Structures

Determining the administrative structure of which a corps will be a part is a decision that will have to be made in the beginning, and that decision will be an important one in the operation of the corps.

A local corps may be either:

- an independent, non-profit organization with no relationship to any political entity (East Bay Conservation Corps and the Marin Conservation Corps);
- an independent, non-profit organization with very strong ties to a city agency (the City Volunteer Corps of New York City and the San Francisco Conservation Corps);
- part of another agency in the city or county;
- a private for-profit organization;
- a public corporation.

A state corps has similar choices. It may be:

- Independent and non-profit like the Texas Conservation Corps.
- An independent governmental agency such as the CCC.
- Part of another governmental agency -- as with most state corps.

"Your choice of administrative entity is going to affect a number of critical things about the way your program operates," one participant said. It affects:

- a corps' independence and its tie to any one political administration;
- a corps' ability to respond quickly to emergencies or other project demands;

- a corps' funding sources, i.e., foundation funding, private sector funding or intergovernmental transfers of funds;
- the types of work and work sponsors a corps can get;
- access to other resources that can help with youth development;
- short- and long-term viability.

Generally, participants said that while corps that are part of other organizations have help obtaining funds in the beginning, they often have to share some of those funds with the sponsoring agency, are unable to raise money from the same sources as the sponsoring agency and have difficulty establishing independent reputations.

As independent, non-profit agencies, they have less stability and fewer resources to tap for initial support, but can build their own constituencies, can be independent of political pressures, can raise their own funds and have more flexibility in terms of the sponsors and projects they select.

Staffing Structures

In determining staffing needs for a corps, organizers must weigh a variety of considerations. Those considerations include:

- The degree of control a corps wants to have over such aspects as recruitment. "You must consider," one participant said, "whether, for example, you want to do all the staff recruiting yourself or have another agency do that for you."
- The degree of control the corps will have in project planning. "Do you, for example, want to take total responsibility for project planning, do you want someone else to do that for you, or do you want some kind of mixed mode, where you might do and suggest new projects but also be responsible to planning agencies?"
- The degree of control desired on the work site. "Do you want to pay the supervisor who will be with the youth day in and day out, or rely on another agency or a sponsor for that kind of supervision?"

The answers to these questions will help a corps, in part, determine some of its staffing needs.

Workshop participants generally agreed that the most important person in the organization is the crew leader, and they offered criteria for selection.

"This is the person who is going to establish the corps' relationship with the young person," one participant said. "They're the ones who are going to pull this off; that relationship is going to be the most productive one."

Some of the qualifications are screened for during the hiring process; others can be developed through training.

Qualifications that are screened for include:

- Hands-on competence. Prospective crew leaders must demonstrate competence in the occupational areas to be undertaken, or demonstrate related skills and the ability to acquire new ones. Crew leaders must be able to teach by demonstrating as well as by explanation.

- Experience with youth. A crew leader must have a genuine interest in young people, particularly those who are disadvantaged and who have not succeeded in school.

- Maturity. It is important for adults who work with young people to possess the patience and judgment necessary to handle the demands of working with slow-learners, the handicapped and youth with low self-esteem.

- Ability to communicate. A crew leader must know how to approve and disapprove clearly at the appropriate time.

- The ability to learn from experience. A good crew leader, like a good teacher, should be able to help young people look beyond the immediate and anticipate the consequences of their actions.

- Energy. A crew leader must be endowed with boundless energy.

COSTS AND VALUE OF CORPS PROGRAMS

(A Discussion)

Costs can be high in youth conservation corps programs, participants said. Some of the most expensive residential programs range from $15,000 to $22,000 per slot per year, meaning a cost per corpsmember of about half that -- or between $7,000 and $10,000 per year.

But, one participant noted, the cost of youth corps programs are not out of range when compared to other kinds of job training programs, and the costs of maintaining youth in jails and other detention facilities. Those costs can range from $15,000 per person per year to as much as $80,000.

"The most important thing about costs -- and this is particularly important when you're presenting them to legislators or officials -- is that you can't just consider costs. You have to think about the benefits that are being derived from the dollars you're spending," one participant said. "These programs distinguish themselves from traditional employment training programs in that tremendous community work is being done."

In addition, there are tangible and intangible benefits to the corpsmembers. Tangible benefits include the teaching of job and educational skills that make corpsmembers productive members of society. Intangibles include the self-esteem, self-confidence, acceptance of others, trust, social responsibility and a work ethic.

"Interestingly," another participant said, "in this room, we have programs represented that have budgets all the way from $300,000 a year to $49 million. I think that, in itself, indicates the range of possibilities that exist."

Nancy Peterson, consultant to the San Francisco and East Bay Conservation Corps, presented a sample budget of $1.5 million. Of that, she said, staff costs are approximately 30 percent, or about $450,000. Corpsmembers wages and employment taxes comprise about 40 percent or $600,000. Transportation can be expected to cost $150,000. Work program expenses, including equipment and supplies, will cost $75,000, and educational programs, will cost about another $75,000. Administration and overhead costs are about $100,000 and special services will cost about $50,000. Of course, costs vary tremendously based upon the specific corps design and administrative structure.

PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING A CORPS

(Small Group Discussions)

For the last sessions of the workshops, participants broke into small groups to discuss funding resources and critical players in the planning process. A summary of their discussions follows.

Funding Options

- Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) funds distributed through a local Private Industry Council (PIC) have been used for training, education, job placement efforts, summer youth wages, small stipends and limited support services. For example, the Dutchess County Youth Community Resources Development Corporation in New York is funded totally by JTPA funds. The Texas Conservation Corps uses local JTPA title IIA funds and state JTPA Section 123 funds for recruitment, training education and job development.

  The use of JTPA funds has some drawbacks, however, because federal legislation requires that they support programs that target economically disadvantaged youth.

- State and local government revenues are less restrictive than federal funds. These funds, while generally not long term can be used to pay for start-up, planning, program development, corpsmember develop ment programs and operating support. Corps that use such funds include both the year-round and summer state-sponsored corps.

- Fees for service. Earned income can include full or partial payment by project sponsors for the work a corps does. Although such fees vary, corps have been paid by cities, counties, federal agencies, land trust, non-profit organizations and special units such as parks and recreation, water, utility and resource conservation districts.

  In some cases, the staff of a corps bids for the right to do a job; in other cases, contracts are negotiated that allow a corps to work for an agency on a variety of projects for a specific length of time.

In such contracts, corps leaders must be careful to balance the work that is to be accomplished with other youth development goals.

In general, these arrangements are more suited to well-established corps with a proven ability to complete a task in a timely manner. Also fee for service work requires additional record keeping and administrative costs.

- Pro bono support and donated assistance can help supplement other sources of funding. It can provide such things as rent-free space, legal assistance, accounting and financial services, on-loan executives and volunteers. Donations have included tools, building supplies, vehicles and computers.

  While the services or equipment donated are valuable in themselves, they also enable the corps to involve members of the community in the organization.

- Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), created under the federal Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, are administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development which distributes the funds to cities based on a formula. Federal policies require that the funds benefit low- and moderate income or disabled persons and must be used to prevent or eliminate slums or blight or meet emergency needs. Some local restrictions also apply. And since the program is re-authorized by Congress each year, it is highly vulnerable.

  These funds have been used successfully in the San Francisco and East Bay programs to revitalize neighborhoods, build playground structures; for landscaping, urban park development, tree planting, youth and senior centers, community facilities and schools.

- Foundations are a key source of seed money, especially to support initial planning.

Critical Players in the Planning Process

Participants also discussed the sectors that might be consulted in planning a corps. Their suggestions included:

- Employers in the private sector can provide an important resource for corps planning. The private sector can be persuaded, for example, to provide employment for corps members who complete the program.

In the Texas Conservation Corps, private industry has also provided significant funding to the program. Private employers can be persuaded to make such donations if they understand that they receive immediate returns on their donations through tax write-offs, credits and wage incentives for employee training and by generating a long-term source of competent entry-level employees.

- Public educational institutions can fulfill many corpsmember needs. The CCC, for example, works closely with community colleges. The East Bay Conservation Corps works with a major urban school district in Oakland and the San Francisco Conservation Corps uses both the city school district and the community college system. In some cases, corpsmembers attend classes at the schools. In others, the school system sends teachers to corps sites.

- Local employment and training organizations, CBOs, environmental groups and youth serving agencies are other agencies that can be asked to support a corps' efforts.

ADVICE FROM VETERANS

OF

EXISTING GROUPS

Each staff member and director of an existing youth corps program represented at the workshops was asked:

> "What three pieces of wisdom would you give those starting a corps?"

This was their advice.

- Establish a clear program ideology which is as altruistic as possible, e.g., youth development, service to society, community development.

- Find a visionary who believes in the ideology to run the program. If the person is stronger on vision and intuition than on administration -- take him/her!

- Be flexible (without catering to anarchy of course); like most experiential programs, you will learn as you go along. Some/many successes will occur that do not fit the ideal paper model - but if it works - do it!

- Keep the organization lean. Its amazing how fast the bureaucratic mind develops. From day one, the corporate ethic is improved program efficiency effectiveness - forever!

- Set some targets - say a dozen or so - that everyone knows about and feels they can contribute to e.g., number of sponsors, hours worked, trees planted, pages of personnel journal kept by participants, number of first aid courses taken...etc. Publicize all successes!!

- Watch the finances! All the staff and participants should learn to live within a budget - above all they should be encouraged to know and understand the finances of the entire operation.

- Enjoy. It's great to be involved in a new venture.

Ken de la Barre
Katimavik

Hire and train your project development staff as early as possible. Good projects take a long time to develop, especially if your program is unknown. Develop twice as many projects as you think you will need for the first three months.

- Clarify your goals and the kind of projects you want to do. Don't compromise on these areas with sponsors or other parts of your organization. Plan to do at the outset what you believe you should be doing. Projects can be shorter or smaller than planned but they should be characteristic, and as challenging as possible.

- Project developers should be held responsible for all aspects of project development and implementation. What, when and how. Project developers have two clients, the sponsors and the operations staff. They must design projects that are acceptable to both.

Mary Bleiberg
City Volunteer Corps

- Emphasize visibility, symbolism, media!! (both to generate public support and pride/esprit de corps among members).

- Devise an organizational structure that will allow as much independence and flexibility as possible.

- Think hard about the program/sponsor/crew leader relationship. Critical for determining ability to work together while still insuring program philosophy (objectives/procedures) are consistent throughout service area.

Bill Brakken
Wisconsin Conservation
Corps

- If you are in charge of education, remember or realize that the staff are your students, not the participants. Teach the staff first and the participants will get what they learn from them.

- Go as slowly as you have the luxury to do. Quality is seriously undermined by trying to grow too quickly.

- Team leader selection, training, nurturing and evaluation are the keys to success.

Barbara Conners
City Volunteer Corps

- Contact the city, county and local officials in your area and explain your program to them. Also contact the private sector.

- Secure your 501 (c)(3) (non-profit) status before you start fundraising efforts.

- Clear the way with local agencies - city, county, etc. - for reimbursement projects to insure these departments include your organization in their budgets.

- Give yourself at least six months to do all necessary ground work for start-up.

- The director must be the one who selects the staff.

Ron Espinoza
Sacramento Cons. Corps

- Value, visibility, variety.

  Value - work that needs doing, that has a degree of importance to the host agent, and that will benefit the corps in terms of dollar value of work accomplished and/or skills to be learned by corpsmembers. Make-work is avoided!

- Visibility - a percentage of projects must be in areas frequented by the general public. Such projects must possess positive public relations potential.

- Variety - project schedules must provide for a variety of work projects. Variety improves corps member motivation and skill learning. Corpsmember capabilities are recognized by host agencies, thus improving future project assignments.

- Match skill levels to project needs. Attempt to match the skill levels of crew leaders and members to the needs of the project. To date, while accomplishing many complex projects -- i.e., building 40-foot bridge spans -- the MCC has never had to withdraw from a project due to a mismatch of skills and project requirements.

- Secure host agency commitments.

  The MCC is dependent upon host agents for technical support. Blueprinting, special equipment or tools, etc., must be provided by the host agent. In most cases, these items must be committed (completed blueprints, equipment standing by) in advance of the start-up of a project. In situations where support services are not in place, MCC crews are not placed.

Larry Fonnest
Minnesota Department of
Natural Resources

- Clearly define the objective - what benefit the program will produce and who will be the recipients of the products or benefits.

- Have a clearly written policy of how the objective is to be achieved. Be sure the supporters of the program understand the objectives and policy prior to implementation.

- Strive for quality. Work within the limits of time and staff abilities. Investigate other similar programs and use their experience; but always tailor their experience to your needs.

- Always keep your program in the public view. Base your public relations on the quality and products of your program and how you intend to or have helped your community.

William Greenawalt
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of
Environmental Resources

- The rewards are few but meaningful: there is so much more that you will put into the program than you may get out of it. Remember, you are empowering people to take control of their lives! What is more rewarding? (Saving a life is the ultimate thing you can do for another person).

- Carefully select what you provide corpsmembers; particularly in regard to education, insure that it is what corpsmembers want and need. Consider where traditional systems have failed your corpsmembers and what can be done to "fix the holes." The proverb reads: "Teaching means reminding others what they already know." What do we need to remind today's youth?

- There is always resistance: whether it is funding or corpsmembers, new and different ideas are difficult to implement. Look toward the future to see your vision realized and guide it towards that end. If it's right and good, it will succeed. Good luck!!

Elizabeth Halas
San Francisco Cons. Corps

- Most important key to success is selection, training and direction of staff. The performance of the staff will make or break a program.

- Develop a program that will combine learning through work experience and an education component, but see that projects and education are closely related, not separate operation.

- Put forth an extensive public relations effort involving elected public officials, community leaders, project sponsors and the media. This will protect initial funding sources, generate additional funding sources, develop community and private sector sup port. This will also open doors for job placement and other resources needed to run the program.

- A final thought is to be willing to work hard, have a clear understanding of your mission, and no matter how tough it gets keep a sense of humor and maintain close contact with the corpsmembers to know what is really happening.

Bob Johnson
Sacramento Cons. Corps

- Establish clear goals that present a long-term vision, but also can be attained in the short-run. Examples:

    - You want to serve 500 youth, but get a good program for 50 participants in place first.

    - You want to be able to accomplish projects or services for 100 agencies and 1,000,000 people; start with 5 agencies that you know will provide the best support, most visible projects with the greatest potential for success.

- Identify the people and organizations that are critical to your program's survival in terms of political and community support, program implementation, and financial stability. Communicate with them regularly and listen to what they have to say!

  However, never trade off the quality of goals of your program just to obtain monetary of other support (unless you have really evaluated the consequences).

- Hire the best staff you can. Your program will only be as good as the people operating it.

- And last, but certainly not least, GOOK LUCK!! Being involved in the starting of a new corps has been, without a doubt, the most difficult, and yet the most rewarding experience in my career. And believe it or not, I would do it all over again (with some changes, of course).

Nancy Peterson
San Francisco CC

- Take two aspirin. Get plenty of rest. Call me in the morning. The preceding description is my way of saying that one should have a sense of humor.

- A deep desire for service to others (including the environment) in starting a conservation corps.

- Know the program mission statement and keep the legislation broad.

Tim Rochte
California Cons. Corps

- Specify and decide on a precise "declaration of purpose." What do you really want to accomplish? With whom? What specific mandate?

- Once your program has been drafted - be aware of the normal evolution of your program - always referring to your original purpose or mandate.

- Be ready to take "risks" and learn from your achievements, successes, failures - referring to your original "raison-d'etre." Be flexible with the "features" of your program without compromising the "essential benefits" (of your mandate).

Wesley Romolus
Katimavik

- From the start, inform your participants and staff what the purpose, goals and expectations of your program are. Hold on to your "crew concept," do not shake the boat or move participants from crew to crew; be consistent.
- Establish your program and education goals from the start and maintain consistency. When changes are needed, try to implement them subtly if possible.
- Be firm about your expectations of the worksite sponsor and incorporate a liaison between the sponsor and crewleader to start-up and maintain projects. (Be Clear!!!)

Judy Stanger
Youth Resource
Development Corporation

- Develop excellence (in efforts) in/from both the work and education aspects of the program.
- Develop a clear, simple and heartfelt set of goals. This "vision" of the corps must be stressed from the executive director to the corpsmembers. Make few compromises in this vision. Put the quality of the program above all else.
- Make a priority the hiring of staff that is talented in different areas: multi-cultural, men and women and able to articulate the value of this particular kind of youth leadership development.

Richard Woo
San Francisco Cons. Corps

VI. STAFF DEVELOPMENT

The workshop was held at the Wisconsin Conservation Corps' headquarters in Madison on September 25 and 26. There were 24 participants from 14 programs.

Agenda topics included:

- Recruitment and selection of staff
- Orientation
- Ongoing training opportunities
- Communication

Resource persons were:

- John Kimbrough, staff training officer, California Conservation Corps
- Tony Richards, associate professor, Dalhousie University; board member, Katimavik
- Judy Walsh, Judy Walsh & Associates, trainer and consultant in management and communications

TRAINING, RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

A Presentation By
Tony Richards
Dalhousie University

Training

The concept of training presumes that staff members come into a program lacking certain skills that have to be taught, according to Tony Richards, an associate professor of experiential learning and a board member of Katimavik.

Those skills may be "hard skills" -- including, for example, the ability to operate a chain saw, drive a heavy vehicle or administer first aid. Or they may be "soft skills" -- the ability to communicate, to counsel youth or to have successful interpersonal relationships.

In establishing a training program, an organization will have to ask itself a series of questions to determine its needs. The answers to those questions will help focus the program.

The first series of questions will help determine the purpose of training:

- Is training needed because the staff is ineffective?
- Is it needed to reduce turnover and burn-out among staff members?
- Or is it needed because the job-related skills are so specific that a staff member cannot be expected to have learned them elsewhere?

The second set of questions will help develop specific goals for the training program:

- What is the mission of the program? "Have that in your mind all the time. What is the purpose of your program -- both practically and philosophically? Is it to develop a work ethic or is it to develop a service ethic, or both?"
- What is the program dependent on? "Is it a job training program? Is that the end-product that you want to create -- to give young people skills so they can get jobs? Make sure that's always in mind because it's important in terms of the sorts of people you want to train."

- What qualities and skills do you want staff to have? "The answer to this question may involve listing the hard and soft skills necessary to do the job."

- What skills and abilities do staff members already have? "You've made the search, you've had the interview, you've made the selection. That process should have helped you develop a profile of who these staff members are."

- What do they need? "If there is no difference between the answer to this question and the two before it, then you don't need any training. But assuming there is a gap, then the answer to the next question will be the essence of the training program."

- How do you close the gap? "Once the needs of the organization and the skills of the staff members have been determined, the organization can begin to think about the training program." That process will involve still another set of questions.

- What are the goals of the training program? "The answer to this question may involve actually listing both the short- and long-term skills and methods for teaching them -- through simulation, films, lectures, etc."

- What are the logistics? "For example, if I want to teach my skill outdoors, logistically I've got to move people. So do I have the transportation, the time available, the money in the budget, a place to do the teaching?"

- What are the tools available? "Geographically, an organization must consider where the training will take place, whether it will be in an urban center, on the work site, in a board room or conference room and whether that will be done by someone within the organization or an outsider.

- Finally, the organization must decide how it will demonstrate that the training has been successful.

Richards then listed three main criteria for any training program:

- It must be several days long. "I don't think you can achieve training in a day."

- It must be intensive. "Because of that, you probably want to do the training away from a work site."

- It should be experiential. "By that I mean it should be 'hands on.' The training should be as specific as possible and be carried out in such a way that it teaches from direct experience, rather than by sitting in a room going through paperwork."

- It should be ongoing. "There should be a way to reinforce the skills from time to time."

- Finally, there should be some mechanism for assessing skill levels.

Richards then offered several options for training programs:

- Staff cadres. Training could be done by groups of staff members who work alongside newcomers, or by staff members who have no other function but to train.

- Academies. Like the California Conservation Corps, other organizations could establish an academy where staff members are trained before they go into the field.

- During selection. Some training could become part of the selection process. "It could be that you bring in 30 people at a time, even though you only have 10 positions. Those extra people could become a pool of future employees."

- Apprenticeships. "In apprenticeships, prospective staff members serve as assistants on a part-time basis and for less pay than full-time staff members. If they are successful after a certain period of time, they can be hired full time."

- Exchange programs. "Through exchange programs, corps could help train each other's staff members for a period of time to give them different experiences or help prevent burn-out."

Whatever option a corps chooses, "there is a need for very deliberate training. We need to be upfront and say this is training and this is what it's about, and not leave training to chance."

Following the presentation, participants discussed specific programs in their own corps.

One participant said his organization had expanded its training program from one day -- which stressed administrative issues -- to three days. One day was spent on administrative issues, such as paperwork and record-keeping, and the remaining two days were spent on motivation, publicity skills, communication and role-playing.

A California Conservation Corps representative said: "I think it's really important for new staff members to understand the mission of the organization. I think that's the first step. Then they have to learn what their role is in that mission. They also need to recognize what skills they have and identify what areas they will need to develop further. In the CCC we have a three-week orientation and training program."

From a representative of the City Volunteer Corps of New York: "We look at work supervisors as permanent staff but they're on a one-year probation. They come on board a month before their actual work with the crews begins. During that month they do daily exercise, work with each of the supervisors, meet with administrative staff and eventually fill in as a supervisor when one is absent."

In the next segment of the workshop, participants broke into small groups and identified some goals and concerns re: staff goals for staff training programs.

One group listed as its objectives: orientation on paperwork, introducing new members to other staff members, teaching the organizational structure, giving new members a sense of program goals and history, introducing members to sponsors, taking members on tours of work sites, teaching them safety procedures and the use of equipment, training them in the use of tools and problem-solving techniques.

Other groups listed their priorities by category: administrative, supervisory and safety concerns. Other items, specifically related to the nature of individual corps' work, were also mentioned.

Selection

The selection process can help lessen the amount of time needed for training, Richards said, if it is used to find people who already have the most important qualities and the ones that are hardest to teach. In other words, he said, "If you can do a 100 percent job in selection, you can reduce training to a minimum."

Before the selection process begins, establish what experience and skills applicants must have in order to apply. Identify what your basic requirements are and remember that whatever applicants don't have, you must be prepared to provide training for.

The first step in the selection process itself is pre-selection, when applicants are screened to see if they meet your minimum qualifications. One way this can be done is through a relatively brief telephone conversation or through seeking references from other organizations.

The second step is the actual interview in which applicants are asked pointed questions about their "hard skills" and the interviewer tries to determine the level of "soft skills."

The third stage involves simulations, in which an applicant is asked how he/she would cope with certain specific situations. Corps generally require that staff be effective in group situations. Simulate one and see how the applicants interact with each other.

"The bottom line is your judgment as an interviewer," said one participant. "You may want two or three people doing the interviewing, rather than only one." If you invest up front in the selection process by putting people through a number of steps, you will learn more and have a better chance of avoiding the selection of inappropriate staff.

Recruitment

In the last segment of this part of the workshop, participants were again divided into groups to discuss recruitment.

One group suggested advertising in newspapers and on radio; getting referrals from college placement offices, minority businesses, environmental groups and national job corps; and promoting from within the corps.

A second group also suggested public service announcements on radio and television, referrals from former corpsmembers, and speaking to public and private organizations.

A third group suggested targeting women's associations, the Peace Corps and other job service programs. The fourth group suggested looking for members from within other similar kinds of organizations and one participant suggested that several corps could work together on recruitment.

IMPROVING COMMUNICATION

A Presentation By
Judy Walsh
Judy Walsh & Associates

To begin her presentation, Judy Walsh, -- whose consulting firm provides training in management and communications -- to such organizations as the National Park Service, the Corps of Engineers and TRW -- asked workshop participants to list the most important qualities in a supervisor.

The answers included:

- an ability to delegate responsibility;
- an ability to remain calm in unexpected situations and to allow those who have been given the responsibility for solving the problems to do their work without interference;
- a willingness to take risks;
- the ability to forgive employees for errors;
- caring about employees as individuals;
- the ability to listen and communicate;
- the ability to discipline effectively;
- the ability to follow through on a job;
- competency;
- the ability to instill competency in others.
- a sense of humor and the ability to encourage others.
- the ability to organize.

In summarizing the responses, Walsh suggested that the participants were looking for so-called "people managers."

"Anybody who has these qualities is a good people manager." Some people have it intuitively; some people hone the ability over the years."

An essential ingredient in the ability to manage people is the ability to communicate. Very often, the need is not for technical training, but for improved communications between supervisors and their employees. "The single thing that makes the difference in the productivity of an organization is the ability of its members to communicate. But the question is, how do you get people to improve communication?"

In her presentation Walsh offered two methods for improving communication. One method is the Nominal Group Process. The other is a technique known as Active Listening.

Nominal Group Process

"The process is similar to brainstorming. The technique is quick and applicable to various situations. It aims to get out thoughts, questions, feelings and concerns in an organized way."

The process involves five steps:

- o Step One: Individual Inventing. Staff members are asked to write down, in short paragraphs, the most important problems they face in the areas of communication, motivation and roles. They may take 10 minutes.
- o Step Two: Round Robin Listening. A group leader will then list on a bulletin board or blackboard the problems that were noted so they can be seen by others. In making the lists it is important not to edit the comments or attempt to clarify them, and to list them all.
- o Step Three: Serial Discussion. Participants may elaborate on or clarify the problems that are listed.
- o Step Four: Ranking. Each participant chooses the seven problems that are the most important to him/her and ranks them in order of importance.
- o Step Five: Sharing Results. The group has now identified the most important problems it wants to solve, and can begin discussing solutions to those problems.

Active Listening

In the technique known as active listening, there is a basic assumption that most conversations -- whether personal, professional or social -- take place on two levels, content and relationship.

"The content level is the easy one because it is the facts, the figures, the statistics, the demographics. The relationship level involves the feelings behind what is being said."

In active listening, the feelings beneath the surface are addressed. If those feelings are not addressed, the person expressing them may find some other way to get the feelings across.

"If I feel like I'm not being listened to, somebody on my staff is going to get 'kicked' because I'm not getting the communication I need. Sometimes we talk in code. We don't talk straight. The reason we don't talk straight is because our culture has seen to it that we don't talk about feelings.

"For example, instead of saying I really feel like I'm being mistreated and someone else is being favored, I might say: 'The employment policy around here stinks.' I don't have the guts to say what I'm really feeling. So your responsibility as an active listener is to get across this barrier and try to de-code what's being said. Then you need to send a message back that you care.

Active listening need not take any more time than any other kind of conversation. And it pays off. "By identifying feelings, you begin to dissipate anger and that anger dissipates even more as you really begin to communicate."

Walsh then set up the following scenario to demonstrate the technique:

In the scenario, a crew is constructing a play yard in a housing project and the crew leader is approached by an obviously angry man who demands to know who has given the crew the authority to do the work.

The crew leader responds by saying: "You're certainly angry about us being in this community; I'm not sure I understand." The man says he owns a construction company that could have been given the project.

"I now have tons more information about what is going on. And I got it by actively listening to all that energy," Walsh said. "What has angered the man is that he's feeling like his agency got set aside -- got knocked out by somebody else, so he says, 'I'm not angry, I just want to know why I didn't get this project.' What you have done is open the lid to communication rather than put it on and slam it down."

In closing, Walsh said: "People are much more likely to work for you than against you if this is how you talk with them occasionally. This technique increases motivation, makes people want to try a little harder for you the next day."